SOWING THE SEEDS OF STRATEGIC SUCCESS ACROSS WEST AFRICA:
PROPAGATING THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
TO SHAPE THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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JOHNNY J. WANDASAN, MAJOR, UNITED STATES ARMY
B.S., Hawaii Pacific University, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1998

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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Name of Candidate: Major Johnny J. Wandasan

Thesis Title: Sowing the Seeds of Strategic Success Across West Africa: Propagating
the State Partnership Program to Shape the Security Environment

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Albert C. Stahl, M.M.A.S.

_____, Member
Jack D. Kem, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Daniel C. Honken, M.S.

Accepted this 9th day of June 2017 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Prisco R. Hernandez, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or
any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

SOWING THE SEEDS OF STRATEGIC SUCCESS ACROSS WEST AFRICA: PROPAGATING THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM TO SHAPE THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT, by MAJ Johnny J. Wandasan, 89 pages.

The threat to U.S. national interests by the ISIL-affiliated group, Boko Haram and by transnational criminal organizations continue to plague West Africa. In the current era of fiscal constraint, low-cost options must be examined and the best approach must be taken to shape the security environment and stem the tide of regional instability. The National Guard's State Partnership Program is a security cooperation tool that Geographic Combatant Commanders can leverage to enhance the military capabilities of partnered nations. This study will explore the viability of expanding the State Partnership Program's efforts in West Africa to support U.S. Africa Command's theater security cooperation objectives and overarching campaign plan.

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ACRONYMS

ABCT	Armored Brigade Combat Team
AOR	Area of Responsibility
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CCMD	Combatant Command
CNGB	Chief, National Guard Bureau
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
DA	Department of the Army
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
FFP	Fund for Peace
FSI	Fragile States Index
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
G-TSCMIS	Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISWAP	Islamic State – West Africa Province
LOE	Line of Effort
MOD	Minister of Defense
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NG	National Guard
NGB	National Guard Bureau

NMS	National Military Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
POTUS	President of the United States
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
SC	Security Cooperation
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SLE	Senior Leader Engagement
SMEE	Subject Mater Expert Exchange
SPP	State Partnership Program
SRCA	Service Retained Combatant Command Aligned
TCP	Theater Campaign Plan
TSC	Theater Security Cooperation
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Program
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

>As we look toward the future, it is clear that Africa is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community, and to the United States in particular.
>
> — Barack Obama

On February 6, 2007, the White House released a statement by President George W. Bush announcing his decision to create a Department of Defense (DoD) Unified Combat Command for Africa (U.S. Office of the Press Secretary 2007). This signaled to the world the United States' recognition of Africa's strategic relevance and its commitment to strengthening ties with the nations that comprise the African continent. The formation of this command was initially met with criticism because it presented the initial appearance of being a means to satisfying self-serving American interests and not an effort that had mutual beneficence at its core. However, the seed for U.S. partnerships in Africa was planted almost four years prior: on June 20, 2003, South Africa was the first country in Africa to establish an enduring relationship with the National Guard (NG) through an initiative known as the State Partnership Program (SPP) (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 42).

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the National Guard's State Partnership Program should expand in West Africa in light of U.S. national interests and reduced defense spending budgets, and given the recent utilization of the nascent Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept at United States Africa Command

(USAFRICOM). There are many similarities between both efforts, and at first glance the RAF concept appears to offer more robust and scalable options for the combatant commander (CCDR). This paper will explore the RAF concept, focus in-depth on the SPP and the unique capabilities of this program, and make recommendations.

The problems being addressed in this study are the threats to U.S. national interests by the terrorist group known as Boko Haram and other violent extremist organizations in Nigeria and the trans-Sahel region, narcotics trafficking across the Atlantic Ocean through West Africa, and criminal activity in the vast expanse of under-governed territories in the region. "African solutions to African problems" is a credo used to describe the preferred strategic approach for dealing with these issues, and for decades, the U.S. has been enabling this method of engaging Africa's security challenges through the military by means of theater security cooperation programs (TSCPs). In June 2012, the White House published the *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub Saharan Africa*, which delineates four pillars: "(1) Strengthen Democratic Institutions, (2) Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment, (3) Advance Peace and Security, and (4) Promote Opportunity and Development" (White House 2012, 2). The third pillar is comprised of actions that involve military support. While recognizing that Africa's governments and people are the key to resolving their security challenges, the U.S. will advance peace and security by defeating al-Qaeda and other terrorist affiliates and organizations; seek sustainable solutions through security sector reform and regional security; build partnerships and leverage niche capabilities to deter transnational criminal threats; mitigate conflicts and mass atrocities and hold perpetrators of violence accountable; and

support U.N. peacebuilding and peacekeeping initiatives to promote peace and security in sub-Saharan Africa (White House 2012, 4-5).

The 2012 Presidential Policy Directive 16 promulgates the necessity of military action to stem the growing influence of terrorist and criminal activities in Africa. In a resource-constrained environment, senior military leaders must explore all available options to continue this strategic effort. They must exercise balance in seizing the initiative to decisively shape the security environment in order to prevent or deter escalating conflict. In West Africa, establishing large military footprints is not only costly in terms of dollars, but also in terms of risk to the perception of U.S. intentions. Emplacing large, permanent military presence among a resource-rich swath of nations faced with socioeconomic challenges to institutional growth and development could create more friction in the region.

<center>Primary Research Question</center>

National strategic guidance drives the funding for the activities of the armed forces, and prioritizes focus areas for senior military leaders to plan and execute mission activities around the globe. In the current era of fiscal constraint, low-cost, high-impact solutions to prevent and deter conflict is preferable to direct involvement in costly protracted wars and this research will include a review of two options that have the potential to meet these objectives in emerging areas of concern. The area of interest is West Africa, and the two prominent low-cost, high-impact military options are the SPP and the RAF concept. The primary research question is, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?" This thesis examines the

relevance of West Africa to U.S. national interests within the next decade, and will focus primarily on the SPP option for addressing the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3, *Shape the Security Environment*.

<center>Secondary Research Questions</center>

In order to answer the primary research question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?," answers to the associated secondary questions need to be answered. The logical progression of the secondary research questions begins with an analysis of the activities of the SPP in West Africa, including current partnerships and an evaluation of its previous and ongoing engagements. Next, using an operational approach and applied evaluation criteria, a determination of the need for, and viability of expanding the SPP in view of the current conditions in West Africa and the desired future conditions in the region within the next decade is made. Finally, based on the analysis and aggregation of the data obtained during the research, the answer to the primary research question and associated conclusion and recommendations will be determined.

The secondary questions to be answered in this thesis are:

1. What are the current SPP activities in West Africa?

2. Is the SPP a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's theater campaign plan (TCP) security cooperation (SC) line of effort (LOE)?

3. What should the conditions in West Africa be in the next 10 years?

4. Should the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM'Ss TSCP, expand in West Africa?

<center>4</center>

The secondary research questions address the balancing of global U.S. national interests in a resource-constrained environment. There are various funding mechanisms and associated legal authorities that enable USAFRICOM to conduct security cooperation activities with partner nations in West Africa, and the SPP leverages a myriad of funding authorities to offer unique and distinct capabilities in building capacity with partnered nations (DoD n.d., 5-126). Diametrically opposed to USAFRICOM's military resources are the current and emerging threats within the command's area of operations. This resultant operational environment impels the requirement for the four fundamental questions to be answered. The analysis of these four answers within the context of this framework will lead to a conclusion and pertinent recommendations regarding the expansion of the SPP in West Africa.

First, an analysis of the SPP's activities must be conducted in order to understand the capabilities and range of potential outcomes based on past performance in support of USAFRICOM SC LOEs. The primary focus will be on the nations in West Africa that are currently engaged in SPP activities, since the research question focuses on this region.

Second, an assessment of the SPP's efforts in supporting USAFRICOM's TCP SC LOEs will be conducted by applying evaluation criteria in analyzing previous and ongoing activities across Africa. The aim is to determine the viability of the program, given the current fiscally-constrained environment of the DoD.

Third, an overview of the conditions in West Africa is required to better understand the problems in this region and to assess where SPP efforts can be applied over the next decade. This analysis will also aid in identifying potential TSCP goals for USAFRICOM within this timeframe.

Lastly, the U.S. strategic guidance for Africa and the analysis of the current status and viability of SPPs with West African nations will be examined together in order to determine whether SC efforts in this region should include further expansion of the SPP.

The intent of this study is to take an in-depth look at the SPP, utilizing a proposed operational approach to determine the viability of expanding the program within USAFRICOM to support the command's strategic end state and to make recommendations based on the analysis derived from the research.

<center>Assumptions</center>

The scope of this study encompasses the West African nations that are in USAFRICOM's area of responsibility (AOR). Of the 15 nations included in this category, seven are currently engaged in SPP activities. This research will produce recommendations for whether the SPP should expand in the remaining eight countries that make up the West African region. In order to facilitate the conduct of this research, three important assumptions are made. First, that security cooperation objectives will continue to be a priority set forth by national security strategy and incorporated in USAFRICOM's future TCPs. Second, that there will be a willingness by the respective nation's ministry of defense to form a SPP partnership and participate in military activities and exchanges through this program. Lastly, that the U.S. Congress will maintain or increase USAFRICOM theater security cooperation funding, and that USAFRICOM will adjust its resources to enable the formation and sustainment of new SPP partnerships in West Africa.

Definition and Terms

Administrative Control. Direction or exercise of authority over subordinate or other organizations in respect to administration and support (DoD 2013, 3).

Army Warfighting Challenges. Enduring first order problems, the solutions to which will improve current and future force combat effectiveness. These challenges are reviewed and updated as needed to remain applicable for the future force (DA 2017).

Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3 – Shape The Security Environment. How does the Army influence the security environment and engage key actors and local/regional forces in order to consolidate gains and achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic Combatant Commands and Joint requirements (DA 2017).

Construct Validity. Sometimes also called factorial validity, has to do with the logic of items which comprise measures of social concepts. A construct is a way of defining something, and to the extent that a researcher's proposed construct is at odds with the existing literature on related hypothesized relationships using other measures, its construct validity is suspect (Garson 2016).

Convergent Validity. A type of construct validity. Assessed by the correlation among items which make up the scale or instrument measuring a construct (internal consistency validity), by the correlation of the given scale with measures of the same construct using scales and instruments proposed by other researchers and, preferably, already accepted in the field (criterion validity), and by correlation of relationships involving the given scale across samples or across methods (Garson 2016).

Country Support Plan. The primary planning document produced by the State in support of the SPP. The Adjutant General has primary responsibility for the plan, which

is based on the Geographic Combatant Commander's guidance in the Theater Campaign Plan and Country Security Section (DoD 2016a, 19).

Country Team. The senior, in-country, United States coordination and supervising body, headed by the chief of the United States diplomatic mission, and composed of the senior member of each represented United States department or agency, as desired by the chief of the United States diplomatic mission (DoD 2013, 63).

Discriminant Validity. A type of construct validity. Refers to the principle that the indicators for different constructs should not be so highly correlated as to lead one to conclude that they measure the same thing (Garson 2016).

End State. The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives (DoD 2013, 92).

Indicator. In the context of assessment, an item of information that provides insight into a measure of effectiveness or measure of performance (DA 2015a, 1-47).

Learning Demand. In the context of the Army Warfighting Challenges, each learning demand identifies the specific knowledge needed, in the form of a question, based on the objective and desired outcome, that helps address the overall AWFC to which it is nested in prioritized order (DA 2015b, 1).

Line of Effort. In the context of joint operation planning, using the purpose (cause and effect) to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions by linking multiple tasks and missions (DoD 2013, 164). A line that links multiple tasks using the logic of purpose rather than geographical reference to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions (DA 2015a, 1-57).

Measure of Effectiveness. A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect (DoD 2013, 172).

Measure of Performance. A criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment (DoD 2013, 172).

Operational Approach. The operational approach is a commander's description of the broad actions the force must take to achieve the desired military end state. It is the commander's visualization of how the operation should transform current conditions into the desired conditions at end state (DoD 2011, III-5).

Operational Art. The cognitive approach by commanders and staffs – supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment – to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means (DoD 2013, 200).

Operational Control. The authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission (DoD 2013, 200-201).

Operational Environment. A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander (DA 2015a, 1-68).

Security Cooperation. All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and

multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation (DoD 2013, 243).

Title 10 U.S. Code. Title 10 is a code of U.S. law that outlines the conduct of full-time active-duty military service. In the context of National Guard duty, it allows the President to federalize the National Guard forces by ordering them to active duty in their reserve component status or by calling them into Federal service in their militia status in according with the pertinent U.S. code sections (National Guard Association of the United States n.d., 1).

Title 22 U.S. Code. Title 22 is code of U.S. law that outlines the conduct of foreign relations and intercourse, including diplomatic and consular services and other related activities (Office of the Law Revision Counsel: United States Code 2017).

Title 32 U.S. Code. Title 32 is a code of U.S. law that outlines the conduct of full-time National Guard duty. Title 32 allows the Governor, with the approval of the President or the Secretary of Defense, to order a member to duty for operational Homeland Defense activities in according to pertinent sections of U.S. Code (National Guard Association of the United States n.d., 1).

Limitations and Delimitations

There are several limitations impacting this research. Availability and access to data is limited to unclassified research databases and Internet web searches. Further, it will only include information that is not assigned a control designation of "For Official Use Only." Due to constraints on time to conduct the research, personal interviews were not conducted. Limited experience in conducting original research is another limitation.

The primary delimitation of this research is that it will focus solely on the security cooperation efforts by the SPP. The RAF, an evolution of this program, will be reviewed but not analyzed in-depth due to its status as a concept and not a formal program of record like the SPP. Security cooperation is a joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational undertaking, and the Geographic Combatant Commanders and the U.S. ambassadors in the representative countries coordinate to unify efforts in addressing U.S. national security interests abroad. This study acknowledges that other DoD agencies, U.S. governmental, intergovernmental, as well as non-governmental organizations contribute to security cooperation and partnerships with friendly nations to increase security and stability and deter and prevent future conflicts. However, this study will focus primarily on SPP efforts in meeting the Geographic Combatant Commander's security cooperation objectives and theater strategic end state.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the rising importance of Africa was presented, and an introduction to the SPP and the RAF concept as ways to achieve USAFRICOM's theater campaign plan objectives was provided. The purpose of this study, whether the SPP should expand in West Africa within the next decade was discussed, along with the reasons for potential expansion: the threat to U.S. national interests by Boko Haram and other violent extremist organizations, transnational drug trafficking, and other transnational criminal activity in the region. This chapter also identified four secondary questions required to conduct this study: What are the current SPP activities in West Africa? Is the SPP a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's TCP SC LOE? What should the conditions in West Africa be in the next 10 years? Should the SPP expand in West Africa? The

assumptions and key definitions and terms were defined, and the limitations and delimitations of this study was revealed to provide context for the research conducted in this project. The next chapter, chapter 2, will present the Review of the Literature. The literature review consists of three parts: linkages between U.S. strategic guidance and the application of the military instrument of national power in West Africa, the history and background of the SPP, and an overview of the RAF concept.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Introduction

If you close your eyes to facts, you will learn through accidents.
— African Proverb

The literature review will begin with an analysis of the U.S. strategic guidance for Africa in terms of ends, ways and means. Three strategic documents will be examined to understand the synthesis by the USAFRICOM commander in developing the theater strategy and priorities for Africa. The problem being addressed is the West African region, centered at the crossroads of transnational criminal activity flowing eastward from the coastlines inland through North Africa to Europe, and the westward expansion of Boko Haram from Nigeria and the sub-Saharan Sahel. The literature review will continue by examining two military options that support USAFRICOM's theater campaign plan objectives, the SPP and the RAF concept. Both of these efforts have shown comparable degrees of success at building partner capacity and defense institution building initiatives. The purpose of this literature review is to answer the question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?"

Given the growing strategic importance of Africa, and the need for the U.S. armed forces to maintain balance between combat readiness and security cooperation activities, the effective phasing and employment of forces need to be factored in to the equation in order to arrive at a viable solution. The following are some perspectives on the security

environment in West Africa, and the challenges and opportunities in employing both the SPP and the RAF concept in meeting USAFRICOM's long-term strategic objectives.

<div align="center">Strategic Guidance for Africa</div>

The military is employed as a form of national power to protect U.S. national interests in the homeland and abroad. Strategic guidance informs top civilian and military leaders on the application of military solutions through a series of echeloned documents. To understand how the strategic direction promulgated by the President of the United States (POTUS) informs the priorities of the CCDRs, three documents will be reviewed: the *National Security Strategy* (NSS), the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS) and the *National Military Strategy* (NMS). The strategic guidance for Africa will be extracted from these documents in order to facilitate the linkage to USAFRICOM's application of the *Guidance for Employment of the Force*, reflected in the theater campaign strategy. This review will demonstrate how strategic guidance is translated into information that drives security cooperation planning at the theater level. The NSS is foremost in military planning, as it outlines the strategic goals for the military as an instrument of national power.

Published in February 2015, the most recent NSS signals a transition from a decade-long foreign policy that centered on the War on Terror, characterized by "costly, large-scale ground wars" in the Middle East (White House 2015, 9). The current approach is a reflection of the challenges posed by reduced defense spending that the military now faces. In aiming for fiscal sustainability, it prioritizes counterterrorism activities and suggests partnering with other nations to target threats to U.S. national security, specifically violent extremism and terror networks that menace both America

and its allies (White House 2015, 9). The NSS also indicates five global trends impacting the U.S. strategic outlook. Fourth on this list is the ongoing frictions resulting from religious extremists and corrupt rulers that reject democratic reforms and use their power for economic gain at the expense of civil society; this was highlighted among the challenges that will unfold in the decades to follow across the security landscape within the Middle East and nations of North Africa (White House 2015, 4). Africa is mentioned in all four sections of the NSS (Security, Prosperity, Values, and International Order) and is a clear indication of its strategic importance. This will be addressed in the next strategic document, the NDS.

The NDS is a guidance document signed by the Secretary of Defense that provides the ways in which the U.S. military will achieve the objectives outlined in the NSS. Published in January 2012, the current NDS frames the context of the global security environment by highlighting the continued threats to U.S. interests, allies, and partner nations posed by violent extremist activities radiating from South Asia and the Middle East (DoD 2012, 1). The NDS broadly describes how the U.S. will apply the military as an instrument of national power in meeting strategic objectives in Africa. By building partnership capacity in the nations of Africa, the balance of cost and responsibilities associated with the global leadership required to address the complex security challenges in this region is maintained (DoD 2012, 3). The NDS also offers the prospect of continued alliances on the African continent in the future. Acknowledging that the interests and viewpoints of a growing number of African nations align with the U.S. values of freedom, stability and prosperity, the pursuit of new partnerships with these nations are a notable component of the NDS (DoD 2012, 3). The last strategic

document reviewed in this section is the NMS, and it describes the application of military forces based on the goals set forth in the NSS, and the guidance provided by the NDS.

The current NMS was published in June 2015. It characterizes the strategic environment as complex and rapidly evolving as a result of globalization, increasing access to technology, and shifting demographics, especially the growth of youth populations in the regions of Africa (CJCS 2015, 1). The NMS expands on the NSS and NDS by describing the effects that the challenges outlined in the latter documents are creating. The violent extremist organizations, including al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are continuing to weaken and destabilize governments in the region by spreading violence, leveraging terror, and radicalizing populations in the vast areas spanning from the Middle East through North Africa (CJCS 2015, 3). The NMS further prescribes how to address these issues. The employment of U.S. armed forces will aim to strengthen institutions and enable stability throughout Africa and enhance regional security by building partner capacity and countering extremism (CJCS 2015, 9). The NMS, along with other documents including the *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* informs the CCDR's theater campaign plan.

General David M. Rodriguez, commander of USAFRICOM, delivered his posture statement before the senate armed services committee on March 8, 2016. In his statement, he laid out the framework for his theater campaign plan by outlining four enduring objectives of USAFRICOM. These objectives are identical to those delineated by POTUS in the *U.S. Strategy Towards Sub Saharan Africa*. Rodriguez provided a background for his strategy by linking it to the enduring U.S. national interest in Africa due to the region's continued growth in economics, population, influence, and the correlating

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increase in risks to stability from radicalization and persistent conflict (Rodriguez 2016, 2). The importance of "African solutions to African problems" are encapsulated in his recommendation and long-term solution for this region. Rodriguez stated that the U.S. needs to assist African partners in realizing their potential and gaining capability, and underscored the importance of theater security cooperation (TSC) programs to USAFRICOM by indicating that the decisive effort to building partner capacity is the employment of security force assistance and military training exercises (Rodriguez 2016, 2). The USAFRICOM Posture Statement echoes the alignment of values mentioned in the NDS. It highlights the additional benefits of exposing African partners to U.S. values and capabilities through military operations: by demonstrating military professionalism and proficiency, capacity building partnerships can inspire excellence within partnered African militaries (Rodriguez 2016, 3). These partnerships and capacity building efforts will continue to be the foundation for building stability and increasing the security infrastructure in Africa through a sustainable, and balanced approach. This is key, given the priorities that USAFRICOM listed in the 2016 Posture Statement.

Rodriguez's top priority in West Africa is the containment and degradation of Boko Haram (also known as the Islamic State-West Africa Province, or ISWAP), a terrorist group that continues attacks of increasing complexity and lethality in the region (Rodriguez 2016, 8). This group is known for its destabilizing activities across governments in the region. Boko Haram's alignment with ISIL is another growing concern and USAFRICOM is continuing to monitor closely the potential threats to U.S. persons (Rodriguez 2016, 8). Africa's porous borders and the ability of the terrorist groups to influence and impact areas spanning multiple nations required the exploration

of a regional approach. To highlight the opportunities for African partners solving African problems, Rodriguez emphasized the ongoing efforts by the Multinational Joint Task Force formed by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (a regional organization represented by Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria), which the African Union authorized and subsequently garnered support from France, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States (Rodriguez 2016, 8). To further enable African partner defense capability and capacity to disrupt and neutralize transnational threats, Rodriguez established five LOEs: "(1) Neutralize al Shabaab and transition the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Federal Government of Somalia; (2) Degrade violent extremist organizations in the Sahel Maghreb and contain instability in Libya; (3) Contain and degrade Boko Haram; (4) Interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and through central Africa with willing and capable African partners; and (5) Build African peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response capacity" (Rodriguez 2016, 14). The importance of West Africa to USAFRICOM is indicated by this region being addressed in three of the five LOEs.

The common thread across the three strategic documents, the NSS, NDS, and NMS, and the theater campaign strategy outlined in the USAFRICOM Posture Statement, is the need for a sustainable, balanced approach to the execution of security cooperation with aligned and trusted partners to enable a nation to apply organic solutions to organic challenges. One such model of this approach has been in existence for decades, and it emerged from the initiative taken by senior Army leadership and the National Guard: the National Guard State Partnership Program.

The National Guard State Partnership Program

The solution to wicked problems often entail collaborative leadership that can apply critical and creative thinking to generate options to transform challenges into opportunities. It is within this context that the SPP was born. The fragile international security environment in the region comprising the former Soviet bloc countries following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 provided fertile soil for the seeds of opportunity to be planted. In January 1992, Lieutenant General John B. Conway, Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB), informed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Colin L. Powell, that the National Guard "stands ready" to provide advice and resources to the newly independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe to pursue opportunities to form organizations modeled after the National Guard (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 2).

Throughout history, the requirement for the testing of new concepts on a smaller scale before full implementation was a standard that is now codified in the Force Management process. The novel idea of engaging NG soldiers and airmen to conduct military-to-military activities with partner nations was no exception. In the latter part of 1992, USEUCOM organized the Joint Contact Team Program to serve as the conduit to the new militaries of Central and Eastern Europe, and to engage directly with the defense ministries (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 4). Through the Joint Contact Team Program, the NG was able to demonstrate the efficacy of the SPP. By engaging through small groups of U.S. service members who formed what became known as military liaison teams, information exchanges between Western European military staff and noncommissioned officers were conducted along with conferences, workshops, and other

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official visits (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 4). These activities did not require a lot of resources, and were ably accomplished with minimal personnel. The impact however, was such that USEUCOM came to realize the value of the SPP component of the Joint Contact Team Program. The combatant command (CCMD) later provided the oversight and statutory funding to further SPP activities in the region, increasing the program's role in security cooperation engagements across the European AOR (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 4). Less than a year later, after demonstrating the benefits of partnering to conduct training with foreign militaries and garnering support from the adjutants general of the states, USEUCOM, and the CJCS, the SPP would be codified in DoD policy.

President George H.W. Bush released his NSS in January 1993. This document provided the rationale for further enabling the DoD's security cooperation initiatives in USEUCOM through the SPP, and by April 27, 1993, the SPP established its first three official partnerships: Maryland with Estonia, Michigan with Latvia, and Pennsylvania with Lithuania (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 12). In the decades to follow, the SPP would continue to grow to include engagements within each of the six geographic combatant commands (GCCs) across the globe.

Today, the SPP is widely known across the DoD and Department of State (DoS) as a dual status (Title 10 and Title 32 funded activities; federal and state) program that offers a proven capability of establishing long-term, enduring relationships between U.S. states and territories with partner nations through military-to-military, military-to-civilian, and civilian-to-civilian engagements (with support from and coordination with the DoS). The SPP conducts activities as authorized under Title 10 U.S. Code and Title 22 U.S. Code and directly supports both Geographic Combatant Commander's theater

campaign plans, and U.S. Chiefs of Mission integrated country strategies. Through

collaboration with the various DoD agencies, DoS, and the states, the SPP program

enables a whole of society and whole of government approach to security cooperation

(Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 61). The partnerships established between partnered

nations and the soldiers and airmen of the NG through the SPP is trifold. Through the

conduct of security activities and exchanges globally, the SPP increases the readiness of

NG forces, further enhances U.S. interoperability with partner nation military forces, and

maintains enduring relationships while building partner capacity as authorized by law.

(DoD 2015, 1)

State Partnership Program

73 State Partnerships

USEUCOM – 22
Albania / New Jersey (2001)
Armenia / Kansas (2002)
Azerbaijan / Oklahoma (2003)
Bosnia / Maryland (2003)
Bulgaria / Tennessee (1993)
Croatia / Minnesota / (1996)
Czech Republic / Texas, Neb (1993)
Estonia / Maryland (1993)
Georgia / Georgia (1994)
Hungary / Ohio (1993)
Kosovo / Iowa (2011)
Latvia / Michigan (1993)
Lithuania / Pennsylvania (1993)
Macedonia / Vermont (1993)
Moldova / North Carolina (1996)
Montenegro / Maine (2006)
Poland / Illinois (1993)
Romania / Alabama (1993)
Serbia / Ohio (2005)
Slovakia / Indiana (1993)
Slovenia / Colorado (1993)
Ukraine / California (1993)

USNORTHCOM - 1
Bahamas / Rhode Island (2005)

USPACOM - 9
Bangladesh / Oregon (2008)
Cambodia / Idaho (2009)
Indonesia / Hawaii (2006)
Malaysia / TBD (2016)
Mongolia / Alaska (2003)
Philippines / Hawaii, Guam (2000)
Thailand / Washington (2002)
Tonga / Nevada (2014)
Vietnam / Oregon (2012)

USCENTCOM - 5
Kazakhstan / Arizona (1993)
Jordan / Colorado (2004)
Kyrgyzstan / Montana (1996)
Tajikistan / Virginia (2003)
Uzbekistan / Mississippi (2012)

USSOUTHCOM – 23
Argentina / Georgia (2016)
Belize / Louisiana (1996)
Bolivia / Mississippi (1999)
Chile / Texas (2008)
Colombia / South Carolina (2012)
Costa Rica / New Mexico (2006)
Dominican Rep. / Puerto Rico (2003)
Ecuador / Kentucky (1996)
El Salvador / New Hampshire (2000)
Guatemala / Arkansas (2002)
Guyana / Florida (2003)
Haiti / Louisiana (2011)

Honduras / Puerto Rico (1998)
Jamaica / District of Columbia (1999)
Nicaragua / Wisconsin (2003)
Panama / Missouri (1996)
Paraguay / Massachusetts (2001)
Peru / West Virginia (1996)
RSS / Florida, Virgin Is. (2006)
Suriname / South Dakota (2006)
Trinidad-Tobago / Delaware (2004)
Uruguay / Connecticut (2000)
Venezuela / Florida / (1998)

USAFRICOM - 13
Benin / North Dakota (2014)
Botswana / North Carolina (2008)
Djibouti / Kentucky (2015)
Ghana / North Dakota (2004)
Kenya / Massachusetts (2015)
Liberia / Michigan (2009)

Morocco / Utah (2003)
Niger / Indiana (2016)
Nigeria / California (2006)
Senegal / Vermont (2008)
South Africa / New York (2003)
Togo / North Dakota (2014)
Tunisia / Wyoming (2004)

1 JAN 17

Figure 1.   SPP Partnerships by Geographic Combatant Command

Source: National Guard Bureau, "State Partnership Program," accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/ StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20Partnership%20Map.pdf.

The current layout of SPPs established across the CCMDs is depicted in figure 1. As of January 2017, the SPP's portfolio now includes 73 security partnerships, involving all 50 U.S. states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands (herein referred to collectively as, "states"). There are 22 partnerships in the United States European Command AOR, one in the United States Northern Command AOR, nine partnerships in the United States Pacific Command AOR, 23 in the United States Southern Command AOR, five partnerships in the United States

Central Command AOR, and 13 in the United States Africa Command AOR. The process for producing new partnerships take time, and goes through several levels of vetting and approvals before becoming established. Figure 2 depicts the process for establishing new SPPs with prospective partner nations.

Figure 2.   Process for Establishing a New SPP

Source: William B. Boehm, Derek Nestell, and Steven Stearns. *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Forging and Maintaining Effective Security Cooperation Partnerships for the 21st Century* (Arlington, VA: National Guard Bureau Office of Public Affairs Historical Services Branch, 2014), 14.

The establishment of a new SPP entails a process that begins with a prospective

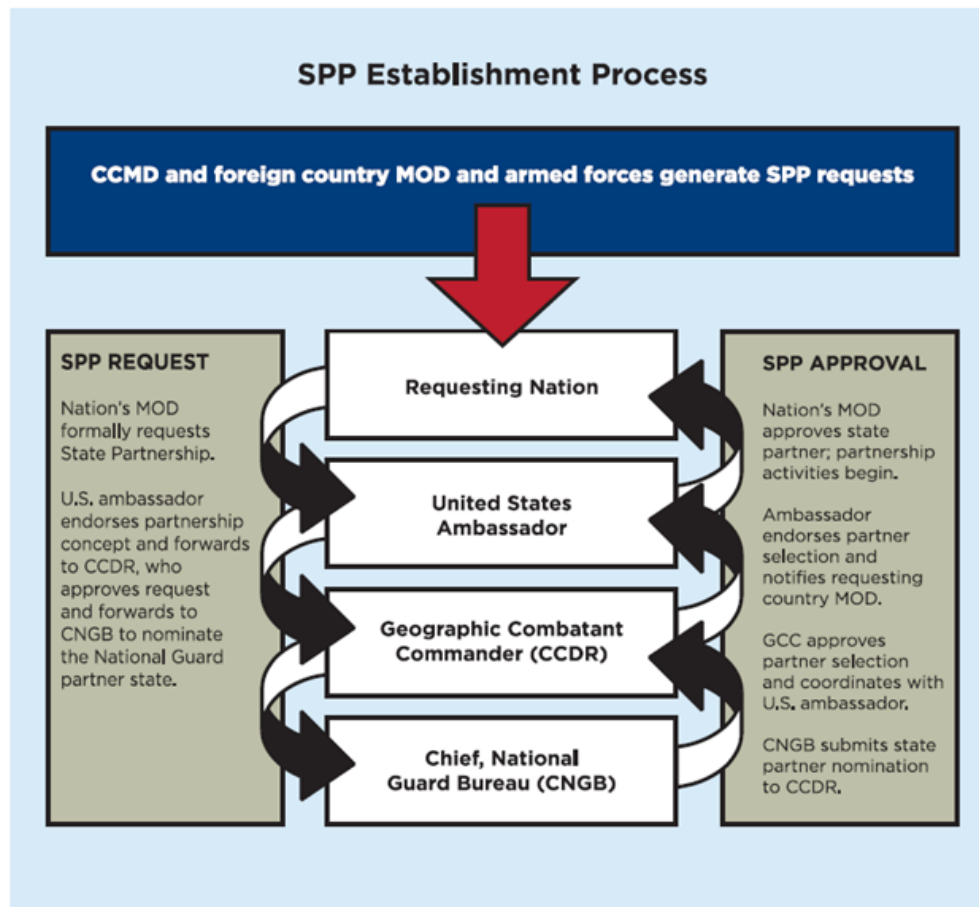partner nation initiating a request for a state partnership through the U.S. ambassador. If

the ambassador endorses the concept of the program request, it goes to the GCC for

approval. Once the GCC validates the request for strategic alignment and resource

availability, the request is forwarded to the CNGB for nomination of a partner state. The

adjutants general from the states are then provided an opportunity to indicate whether

they are interested in partnering with the requesting nation. Once the reviews are

completed and approved, the CNGB submits the nominated state partner to the GCC. If

there is concurrence, the GCC endorses the nomination and begins coordination with the

U.S. ambassador for further review and approval. Once the ambassador endorses the

partner selection, notification is sent to the requesting nation's minister of defense

(MOD), who becomes the final approval authority of the SPP establishment process.

Once the MOD approves the state partner, official announcements are made, and official

visits by the National Guard state partner leadership are made to the new partner country,

or the defense and military leadership of the partnered country will visit the National

Guard state or territory (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014, 15). The official formation of

new partnerships is a ceremonious and highly publicized event. The most recent

ceremony took place on January 26, 2017 when the Indiana National Guard and the

Republic of Niger formed a new SPP. USAFRICOM's press release captured the

momentousness of the event with photos portraying the Adjutant General of Indiana and

the Joint Chief of Staff of the Niger Armed Forces signing the partnership agreement in

full view of military and civilian officials from both nations (USAFRICOM 2017b).

These kinds of events signify the shared expectations and responsibilities by both

partnered U.S. states and friendly nations to enhance security cooperation through an enduring relationship built on mutual trust and values.

Over the years, the SPP has expanded in its efforts to meet DoD strategic requirements. The program now incorporates single state partnerships with multiple countries, multiple U.S. states partnered with a single partner nation, and a Regional Security System where the exercise of appropriate authorities has enabled multiple states to conduct SC activities with a group of member nations within the same AOR (DoD 2015, 2). The evolution of the SPP model is significant in that it demonstrates the flexibility of the program in meeting theater objectives within the often-restrictive nature of policy guidelines and funding authorities. The evolution of this program necessarily included refining the quantity and types of events conducted by the SPP, which generally fall into one of four broad categories in support of the GCC's theater campaign plan objectives: (1) senior leader engagement (SLE), (2) subject matter expert exchange (SMEE), (3) conference or workshop attendance, and (4) exercise participation (DoD 2015, 2). The questions of the quality and long-term effectiveness of the SPP and recommendations for its improvement have been topics of discussion between policymakers and senior military officials for more than a decade.

In May 2012, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published GAO 12-548, reporting to the Congressional Committees on its findings and recommendations for the SPP. The GAO recommended improvements in the following key areas: program oversight by aligning the programs goals, objectives, and metrics with the CCMDs and the embassy country teams; completeness and consistency of reporting; policy guidance for civilian participation in the SPP; and additional training for State Partnership Program

Coordinators and Bilateral Affairs Officers (U.S. GAO 2012, 26). Concurrent to this report, the GAO published its report on security force assistance (SFA). In this report, the GAO highlighted the DoD's prioritization of build partner capacity activities as a key mission area, and emphasis on SFA as "an increasing critical element of this mission" (U.S. GAO 2012, 4). The GAO concluded that additional clarification and guidance on the still-evolving SFA concept was required to enable the GCCs to integrate SFA more effectively into their respective theater SC plans (U.S. GAO 2012, 29). The timing of these two reports could not be better, as it enabled NG planners to socialize the SFA aspect of the SPP with the GCC staffs in designing the way ahead in light of both sets of GAO recommendations.

In her strategy research paper entitled, "The National Guard State Partnership Program: Opportunities and Challenges," Colonel Rhoda K. Daniel reviews the actions taken by NGB given the GAO-12-548 findings. Her insight came from interviews with the NGB deputy J5, Colonel Mark Boll. Colonel Daniel discovered that many of the findings were not new to NGB, and that the GAO helped to elevate the visibility of these known concerns (Daniel 2013, 16). Colonel Daniel's interview further revealed that the issues of professional development opportunities and metrics were prevalent across the DoD, and that NGB had already begun making improvements in the areas identified in GAO-12-548 (Daniel 2013, 16). It was not until two years later that the DoD was able to address the GAO recommendation for more complete and consistent SC activities reporting. In 2014, the Pentagon announced the launch of the Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System (G-TSCMIS) for use by the CCMDs, service chiefs, and agencies to enable improved SC planning and efficiencies (Jordan,

2014). However, observations by the Center for Army Lessons Learned made two years

after the launch indicates that assessing theater SC activities and evaluating program

effectiveness relative to the GCC's theater strategic objectives remain elusive because

TSCPs are intrinsically subjective (DA 2016, 17). The Center for Army Lessons Learned

report offers insight into how quantitative evaluation of how well SC plans are executed

is not as important as understanding how well the activities influence the objectives

outlined in the Security Cooperation Guidance: gaining access, understanding the

operational environment, and creating and building partner capacity (DA 2016, 17).

Other research conducted on the evaluation of SC activities corroborate the inherent

challenges associated with measuring effectiveness when TSCP goals are unclear. A

Rand study published in 2016 reveals that the DoD does not consistently apply

qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the outcomes and impact of SC activities

using a common set of metrics, due in part to a lack of "specific, measurable, achievable,

relevant and results-oriented, and time-bound ["SMART"]" TSCP objectives (McNerney

et al. 2016b, 1).

Throughout FY 2014, there were 105 SPP activities conducted in the

USAFRICOM AOR, including disaster preparedness, medical response, engineering,

cyber defense techniques, military chaplain, intelligence, and law exchanges, officer and

non-commissioned officer development and professionalism, and women's integration

and gender issues (DoD 2015, 4). In FY 2015 the number of USAFRICOM SPP activities

saw a slight increase; the total number conducted across the AOR was 107 (DoD 2016b,

8). For the time being however, the measurement of effectiveness of SPP activities

continues to reside with USAFRICOM's assessment of the program's performance in

supporting the command's SC line of effort, along with a plethora of anecdotal evidence presented by both supporters and critics of the SPP.

<u>The Army's Regionally Aligned Forces Concept</u>

The original concept of the Army's Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) was based on the idea of employing brigade-sized formations (known previously as Regionally Aligned Brigades) to support the GCC's build partner capacity activities and theater security cooperation objectives; however it was only a matter of months before General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, expanded the concept to include functional and multi-functional brigades, divisions, and corps (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015, 139). The viability and application of the RAF concept is still undergoing analysis by senior Army leaders. The RAF concept emerged to address three essential observations and developments: (1) during the previous decades of conflict in the Middle East, U.S. armed forces were not adequately prepared to address the complex operational environment and the associated cultural challenges; (2) increasing requests from CCDRs for more support and capabilities within their GCCs; and (3) the strategic guidance outlined in the latest NMS placed greater emphasis on preventing wars and mitigating conflicts through political, economic, and informational engagements (Scharbo 2015, 86). Since September 2012, the RAF remained understood by military planners as a concept (not yet codified in doctrine) that aims to align Total Army forces (which includes the Active Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve) to a CCMD in order to meet capability requirements that exceed the capability of assigned or allocated forces through additional forces that are service retained CCMD aligned (SRCA) (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015, 139). This effort resulted in two categories of

RAF units. The first category is RAFs comprised of units assigned or allocated to a

CCMD, and the second category is RAFs comprised of SRCA units (DeSousa and

Bertinetti 2015, 140).

Forces that are assigned to a GCC offer the CCDR the highest degree of influence

over specific units that comprise the RAF in this category (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015,

140). This RAF category also includes allocated forces, which offers CCDRs a similar

degree of control inherent in the relationship with assigned forces, a clearly understood

chain of command. Assigned and allocated forces are provided to the CCDR by POTUS

or the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) for the purpose of executing specific missions or

operations in support of a GCC theater campaign plan (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015,

140).

SRCA forces comprise the second RAF category, and includes those Army forces

not assigned or allocated to a GCC that receive region-specific cultural training for RAF

missions from the service component, and not directly from the CCMD (DeSousa and

Bertinetti 2015, 141). Units that comprise this RAF category become aligned for planning

association upon receipt of a mission alignment order issued during a unit's available

period; however, units in this RAF category cannot be tasked by the CCDR (who will

normally exercise operational control), and remain under Army administrative control in

order to execute functions assigned by the Secretary of the Army (DeSousa and Bertinetti

2015, 141). Given that "alignment" and "aligned forces" are not doctrinal terms and the

retention of administrative control by the Army, the employment of forces in this RAF

category requires creativity to be effectively utilized within statutory limits. The

overcoming of obstacles and resultant success of the RAF was first documented during

the First Infantry Division's Second Armored Brigade Combat Team's (2/1 ABCT's) deployment to USAFRICOM.

Statutory limits and authorities set by Congress, DoD, and DoS resulted in funding issues that prevented the first RAF mission from maximizing the potential of the forces and planning that 2/1 ABCT provided (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015, 139-140). The problem centered on "alignment" and the nascent concept of the RAF. Title 10 U.S. Code presided over the employment of 2/1 ABCT as a RAF effort, but there were no new funds to resource their USAFRICOM deployment, and the first interim after action report indicated that sixty percent of the planned missions were cancelled due to funding shortfalls (DeSousa and Bertinetti 2015, 140). With the funding that could be legally authorized, 2/1 ABCT executed in support of USAFRICOM's TSCP initiatives, and the success of these activities created a knowledge base for future RAF missions that support LOEs similar to the SPP in meeting USAFRICOM's TCP objectives. According to U.S. Army Captain Cory R. Scharbo, in his article entitled, "The First Regionally Aligned Force: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead," 2/1 ABCT's RAF missions "either fulfilled or complemented ongoing theater security cooperation agreements, security force assistance, or Army National Guard State Partnership Program initiatives" (Scharbo 2015, 86). Having served as a force integration officer at United States Army Africa Command (USARAF), Scharbo carefully documented the challenges and recommendations gleaned from the first RAF mission.

There are six improvements that Scharbo posits in his article, some of which mirror the areas previously indicated for the SPP. The need for a standardized assessment system to objectively measure mission effectiveness and success is the first

recommendation (Scharbo 2015, 87). Ideally, the G-TSCMIS system would incorporate

these metrics to provide across-the-board standardization for all TSC activities. The

second recommendation is to increase efficiency by streamlining the administrative

personnel processes (Scharbo 2015, 88). RAF deployments incur similar, if not identical

requirements for deployments overseas. These take significant amounts of time and

manpower to conduct records reviews for admin and medical readiness. In addition, other

unique requirements include specific cultural training and requests for passports and visas

(Scharbo 2015, 88). The next recommendation considers a targeted look at the individual

skills of the Army's personnel. Scharbo recommends that the Army's human resource

system assigns soldiers with specialized skills such as language and equipment

maintenance be assigned to RAF units that have a need for these skillsets and proactively

plan and rotate personnel accordingly (Scharbo 2015, 89). The fourth recommendation

addresses responsiveness. Short-notice taskings do not work when requests for additional

forces to augment mission requirements are made, and Scharbo recommends that a top-

down review starting at the SECDEF be conducted to address the lengthy (six months or

more) process to approve requests for RAF forces that exceed the capability of the unit

that was scheduled to perform the mission (Scharbo 2015, 89). The next recommendation

deals with sustainment. Upon arrival in country, RAF units face a host of challenges from

the outset, ranging from supplies, communication infrastructure, to medical support and

equipment maintenance; the recommended solution is to expand the alignment of RAF

units to include the allocation of an Army Sustainment Command (Scharbo 2015, 91). As

noted previously, the term "alignment" is not a doctrinal term and does not imply

additional funding. The last recommendation that Scharbo makes is to revise budgeting

models to prioritize funding for associated operations, maintenance, and training costs if the RAF effort is deemed a viable option given the current congressionally-mandated resource constrained environment (Scharbo 2015, 91). However, the answer to the question implied in the last recommendation goes back to the first recommendation and will take time to justify since objectively measuring success of human-based activities such as security cooperation can take years to complete.

The challenges that the RAF experienced during its first rotation can be attributed to the complexities of the U.S. military's Force Management process. If some or all of the recommendations are acted on to enhance the RAF's ability to respond to and support a CCDR, GCCs will be able to gain ground on the effort to prevent and deter conflict to protect U.S. interests. In his article, "Shaping the Force: Do Regionally Aligned Forces Fit the Bill?," Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Jack T. Judy highlights the intrinsic benefits of the RAF: "Tactically, regional alignment increases the force's understanding of an area's culture, improves relationships, and provides a better situational understanding" (Judy 2016, 9). In this article, Judy continues by also noting the return on investment of the RAF approach. Should tensions escalate in a particular region, RAF units will already have the advantage of first-hand regional knowledge of the operating environment, and a network of relationships to build on (Judy 2016, 10). Yet, as the authors of *Regionally Aligned Forces: Concept Viability and Implementation* point out, neither the SECDEF nor have any CCDR directed the Army to implement the RAF; the Army's mission and justification for force structure remains to fight and win America's wars. RAF is not the supported mission of the Army but serves to support the CCDR's preparations for missions that accomplish that objective (Cantwell, Warrant, and Orwat 2015, 1-2).

Learning and improving while executing, USAFRICOM, U.S. Army Africa, and senior Army leaders continued to explore and expand activities throughout Africa.

Between 2013 and 2015, RAF units (2nd and 4th Brigades, 1st Infantry Division, and 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division) conducted 289 activities including combat life saver training, discussions on engineer battalion capabilities, military police training, unmanned aerial systems training, peace keeper training, and various exercises (U.S. GAO 2015, 55).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a review of the literature pertaining to the importance of Africa to U.S. national interests and literature illustrating how strategic guidance translates into the theater objectives of USAFRICOM was covered. Enabling African solutions to both the growing threat of the ISIL-affiliated terrorist group Boko Haram, and the threat to security and stable governments posed by transregional criminal activity remains a top priority. The review explored two military options that support USAFRICOM's TCP objectives; the SPP and the RAF concept. During the conduct of SC, the SPP activities fall into four broad categories, or LOEs: (1) senior leader engagement (SLE), (2) subject matter expert exchange (SMEE), (3) conference or workshop attendance, or (4) exercise participation. Similarly, the RAF concept has engaged in SC activities as directed by and planned in coordination with, the respective GCC. The RAF concept's current activities generally fit into the same four categories as the SPP's.

The next chapter, chapter 3, is an overview of the research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<u>Chapter Introduction</u>

Knowledge without wisdom is like water in the sand.

— Guinean Proverb

The research methodology will entail a stepwise approach to answer the primary

research question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in

West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal

organizations in the region?" The approach will culminate in a review of literature and

meta-analysis. The secondary research questions will require the development of an

operational approach to illustrate and frame the current conditions in West Africa,

USAFRICOM's TCP objectives and strategic end state, and the SPP as a SC LOE in

achieving USAFRICOM's theater campaign plan and strategic objectives. This model

will serve to contextualize the meta-analysis of the data by illustrating its linkages.

The research will begin with the development of an operational approach

depicting the SPP as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP. A review of literature will

inform the development of this model, and will be supplemented with data from the Fund

for Peace (FFP) organization's 2016 Fragile States Index (FSI) report. The latter

component of the operational approach will be used alongside budgetary figures from FY

2014 and FY 2015 SPP annual reports to Congress to enable quantitative framing and

analysis. Evaluation criteria will be developed from the quantitative data and an

assessment of the SPP will be conducted to assist in answering the secondary research

questions. A conclusion will be drawn from the meta-analysis of the literature review and the evaluation criteria, answering the primary research question. The last step will be to ascertain recommendations for future studies, based on the findings and conclusion of this research.

<u>Operational Approach</u>

A review of literature will form the foundation for the operational approach used to illustrate and assess the SPP as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP. The operational approach should depict how activities are linked to objectives and enable the achievement of desired conditions (DoD 2011, III-16). An example of a generic operational approach is depicted in figure 3.
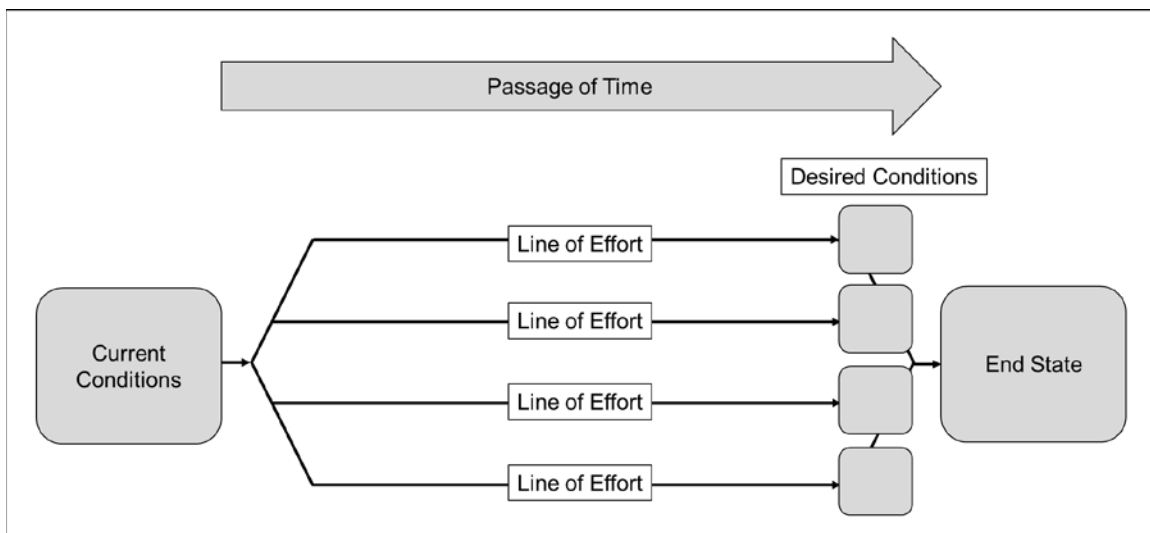

Figure 3.   Generic Operational Approach

Source: Created by author.

The proposed operational approach will describe the current conditions qualitatively based on USAFRICOM's assessment, and quantitatively determined by the data contained in the 2016 FSI report. Lines of effort link multiple tasks or activities through the logic of purpose in order to focus efforts toward establishing both operational and strategic conditions (DA 2015a, 1-57). A review of literature will aid in determining the lines of effort, which will be used to depict the SPP activities and the linkages to USAFRICOM's TCP objectives and strategic end state. The end state will first be defined by the desired qualitative future conditions set forth by USAFRICOM. The data from the FFP 2016 FSI report will inform the quantitative desired future conditions that align with USAFRICOM's strategic end state.

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>

The development of an evaluation criteria is required to make an assessment of the SPP, and to answer the secondary research question, "Is the National Guard's State Partnership Program a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs?" Given that there are currently only seven SPP partnerships established in West Africa (the most recent being formalized at the end of 2016), an analysis of the SPP activities at USAFRICOM will include all partnerships that fall under the command's purview. This will serve to establish context by contrasting SPP execution at USAFRICOM with execution of the SPP at other CCMDs. This analysis will be combined with a targeted assessment of the activities conducted in West Africa to determine the viability of SPP expansion in the region.

This research study will utilize three evaluation criteria: cost-benefit, effectiveness, and perseverance. In his book, *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts*

and Tools, Dr. Jack Kem suggests a system for assessing evaluation criteria that incorporates a tripartite scale for assessments (Kem 2012, 277). Table 1 adapts and implements these concepts accordingly.

Table 1. Viability of SPP Expansion in West Africa			
Evaluation Criteria	+ Good (1 point)	++ Better (2 points)	+++ Best (3 points)
Cost-Benefit 1) Are the funding and resources applied to SPP activities in USAFRICOM producing results at or above the performance rates of SPP activities at other CCMDs?			
Effectiveness 2) Has the SPP been effective in supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs?			
Perseverance 3) Has the SPP demonstrated the necessary commitment to attain USAFRICOM's strategic end state?			

Source: Created by author.

The assessments for each criteria will be assigned a value of Good (+), Better (++), and Best (+++). The value of "Good" indicates that USAFRICOM's SPP activities

are producing acceptable levels of impact and potential; "Better" indicates that the activities demonstrate higher than acceptable levels of impact and potential, but not performing optimally; "Best" indicates that SPP activities conducted at USAFRICOM demonstrates optimal performance, increasing viability.

<u>Stepwise Methodology</u>

The following is the step-by-step approach for the research in this thesis:

Step 1: The first step in the research design is to conduct a review of literature to aid in the development of an operational approach, and to answer the question, "What are the current SPP activities in West Africa?" The literature review will be bolstered by data from the FFP organization's 2016 FSI report, which will also inform the quantitative definition of the current conditions component of the operational approach, and prescribe the quantitative future conditions in order to answer the secondary question, "What should the conditions in West Africa be in the next 10 years?"

Step 2: The second step is to develop an operational approach. This model will serve to frame the context for the meta-analysis of the data and the overall assessment resulting from the criteria evaluations.

Step 3: The third step in the research design is to apply evaluation criteria and respective assessment rubrics to evaluate the SPP as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP. The purpose of this step is to answer the question, "Is the SPP a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs?"

Step 4: The fourth step in the research design is to aggregate the findings from the assessments conducted in the previous steps. Synthesized through the lens of the operational approach developed in the second step, the answer to the secondary research

question, "Should the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP, expand in West Africa?" will be deduced, and the answer to the primary research question will be ascertained.

Step 5: The last step of the research design is to combine the results of the first three steps of this methodological approach to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future research.

<div align="center">Threats to Validity</div>

There are several issues within this research study that pose a threat to its validity. First, the research is limited to unclassified information that is not designated "For Official Use Only." Next, due to the limited time available to conduct this research, only three criteria will be selected for evaluation. Further, the rubric that will be applied to assess these criteria will be based on the limited experience and personal judgment of the researcher. In addition, DoD reports to Congress on SPP activities are only available for FYs 2014 and 2015. Consequentially, the assessment of the effectiveness of the SPP in West Africa in this study will not result from the most comprehensive analysis.

In his work, *Validity and Reliability*, David Garson establishes that there are two main types of construct validity that researchers need to demonstrate in the framework of their research design: convergent and discriminant validity (Garson 2016). Two elements of discriminant validity will impact this research study: content validity and internal validity. Garson explains that content validity is "concerned with whether the items measure the full domain implied by their label," and that internal validity pertains to "defending against sources of bias arising in research design, which would affect the cause-effect process being studied by introducing covert variables" (Garson 2016).

Given the limitations to both the time available for the conduct of the research and experience of the researcher, this study may not fully meet the requirements for content validity. Only three criteria will be used to assess viability, and within these criteria, the respective applied rubrics may be deemed too narrow in scope to meet the rigors of content validity. Further, since the researcher is a member of the National Guard possessing experience in the SPP, inherent biases could potentially threaten the internal validity of this study by means of the Hawthorne effect. Garson describes the Hawthorne effect as a phenomena that occurs when "the expectations or actions of the investigator contaminate the outcomes" (Garson 2016). Lastly, this research may be affected by the non-inclusion of intervening events. Garson explains that history can impact internal validity when "[e]vents not part of the study intervene between the before and after studies and have an effect" (Garson 2016). Since the researcher is limited to using data that is publicly available (SPP reports to Congress for FYs 2014 and 2015), non-inclusion of SPP data for FY 2016 threatens the internal validity of this study.

By maintaining awareness of these threats to validity, the researcher seeks to mitigate the risks of biases throughout the study in order to draw a valid conclusion.

Chapter Summary

The aim of this research methodology is to answer the primary research question within the scope of the study, given the inherent limitations and delimitations and the knowledge of the potential threats to validity and biases. The review of the literature and aggregation of the data from the applied evaluation criteria will preliminarily result in the answers to the secondary research questions. The knowledge gained through the application of this methodology will inform the response to the primary research

question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?" The next chapter, chapter 4, provides an analysis of the data collected within this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Chapter Introduction

>*Assessment* is the determination of the progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, or achieving an objective (JP 3-0). Assessment precedes and guides planning and other activities of the operations process. Assessment involves deliberately comparing forecasted outcomes with actual events to determine the overall effectiveness of force employment. More specifically, assessment helps the commander determine progress toward attaining the desired end state, achieving objectives, and performing tasks.
>— Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-07

This chapter will present the data used in this study to answer the primary research question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?" During the conduct of this study, the literature review will be supplemented with data from the FFP organization's 2016 FSI report. The aggregation of both will formulate the operational approach required to proceed with the proposed research methodology. The analysis of the operational approach and assessment of the evaluation criteria will answer the secondary research questions, and resultantly, answer the primary research question. This research will also provide insight into the question posed by the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3, *Shape the Security Environment*: "How does the Army influence the security environment and engage key actors and local/regional forces in order to consolidate gains and achieve sustainable security outcomes in support of Geographic Combatant Commands and Joint requirements?" (DA 2017).

The literature review answers the secondary research question, "What are the

National Guard State Partnership Program's activities in West Africa?" USAFRICOM's

West Africa AOR is comprised of the following 15 countries: Burkina Faso, the Federal

Republic of Nigeria, the Islamic Republic of the Gambia, the Republic of Benin, the

Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Cabo Verde, the

Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Liberia, the

Republic of Mali, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of Sierra

Leone, and the Togolese Republic (USAFRICOM 2017a). Of the 15 West African

nations, there are seven SPP partnerships established as of January 1, 2017. These

partnerships are listed in figure 4.

USAFRICOM AOR - WEST AFRICA	SPP PARTNER STATE (Year Established)
Burkina Faso	
Federal Republic of Nigeria	California (2006)
Islamic Republic of The Gambia	
Republic of Benin	North Dakota (2014)
Republic of Cote d'Ivoire	
Republic of Ghana	North Dakota (2004)
Republic of Cabo Verde	
Republic of Guinea	
Republic of Guinea-Bissau	
Republic of Liberia	Michigan (2009)
Republic of Mali	
Republic of Niger	Indiana (2016)
Republic of Senegal	Vermont (2008)
Republic of Sierra Leone	
Togolese Republic	North Dakota (2014)

Figure 4.   Current SPP Partnerships in West Africa

Source: Author created with data from National Guard Bureau. "State Partnership
Program," accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/
Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20
Partnership%20Map.pdf.

According to the SPP's FY 2015 annual report to Congress, 107 activities were conducted at USAFRICOM. The review of literature indicated that the four LOEs for the SPP at USAFRICOM include conducting SLEs, conducting SMEEs, conducting conferences and workshops, and conducting and participating in exercises. These LOEs are the mechanisms for accomplishing training objectives aimed at addressing the following areas: disaster preparedness, medical response, military law, officer and non-commissioned officer development and professionalism, military intelligence, engineering and logistics, cyber defense techniques and processes, military chaplains and resiliency, and women's integration and gender issues (DoD 2016b, 8). The planning cycle for these activities is depicted in figure 5. This diagram indicates a robust, sustained process conducted along specified timelines throughout a given FY. Strategic in nature, the planning priorities involve several conferences and working groups that gather inputs from both USAFRICOM and the respective nation's country team members.
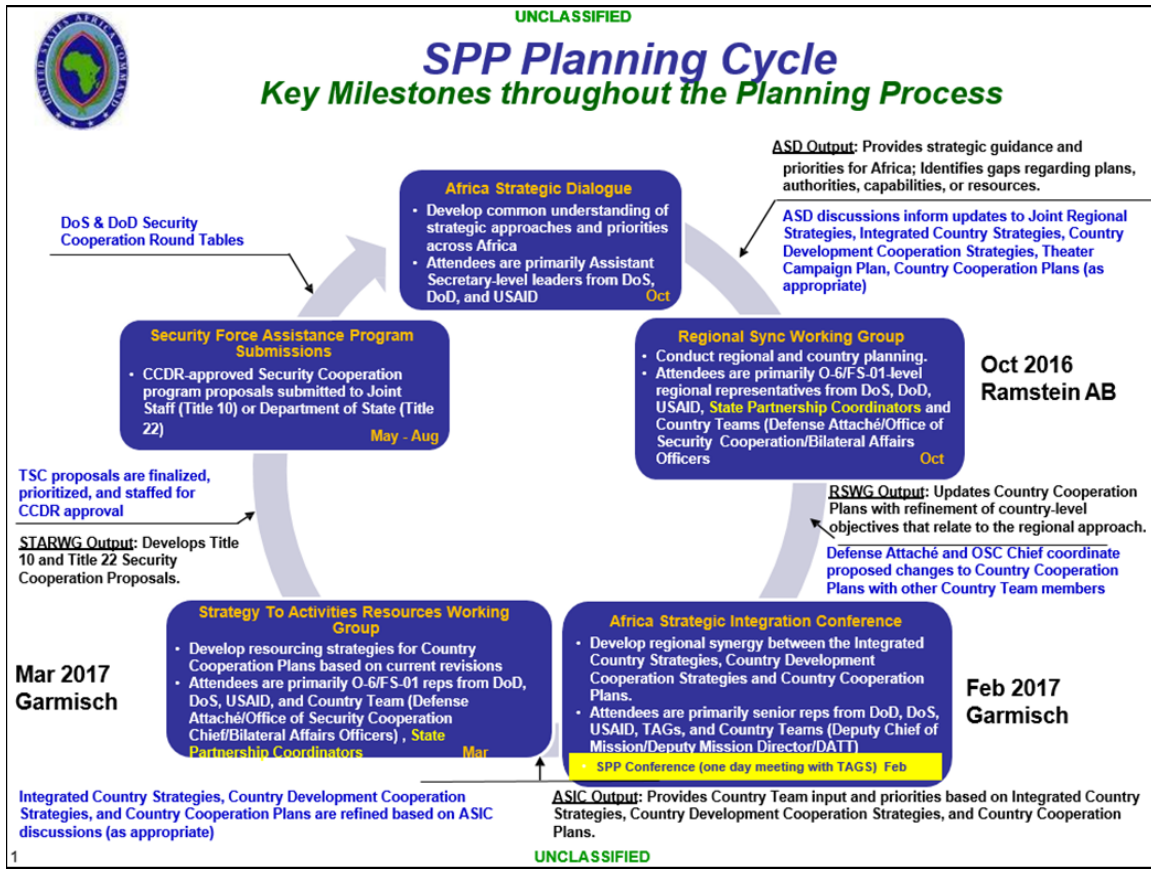
Figure 5.   SPP Planning Cycle and Key Milestones at USAFRICOM

Source: Major John D. McRae, U.S. Army Africa G-3/5/7 ARNG SPP Manager, PowerPoint slide attachment to an e-mail message to author, September 8, 2016.

Further review of the SPP's FY 2015 annual report to Congress reveals that in West Africa, other types of training events were conducted in addition to those cited as main objective areas in the report. For example, in Benin, a SMEE on explosive ordnance disposal was conducted for 24 foreign participants, and in Nigeria, a SMEE on cargo aircraft operations and maintenance was conducted for 25 foreign participants (DoD 2016b, 13-18). These additional training activities are cited in the FY 2015 report as being in support of TCP LOEs not specifically mentioned in USAFRICOM's 2016

posture statement. However, the cited LOEs of the SPP's efforts at USAFRICOM to increase interoperability in combat operations, build defense institutions and assure freedom of movement (DoD 2016b, 13-22) are implied, and dovetails in support of the five that are outlined in USAFRICOM's TCP: "neutralize al Shabaab and transition the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Federal Government of Somalia, degrade violent extremist organizations in the Sahel Maghreb and contain instability in Libya, contain and degrade Boko Haram, interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and through central Africa with willing and capable African partners, and build African peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response capacity" (Rodriguez 2016, 14).

A complete review of all 107 SPP activities conducted in support of USAFRICOM in 2015 indicates alignment with the CCMD's LOEs and goals. This is an indicator of compliance with prior year instructions that may have paralleled guidance found in the FY2017 SPP Program Management Guide. The FY2017 guide instructs the respective SPP state's State Partnership Program Director to align the Combat Support Plan with the Country Security Cooperation Section and U.S. Embassy Integrated Country Strategy, and to link all SPP activities to at least one CCMD's Intermediate Military Objective and LOEs (DoD 2016a, 19). A comparison of the associated costs and numbers of foreign and NG participants for SPP activities conducted across the six GCCs during FY 2014 and FY 2015 is depicted in figures 6 and 7.

FY 2014										
GCC	Total DoD Cost ($)	Total # of SPP Engagements	Avg Cost Per Engagement ($)	Total # Foreign Participants	Avg # Foreign Participants Per Event	Avg Cost Per Participant ($)	Total # Activity Days	Avg Cost Per Day ($)	Total # NG Participants	Avg # NG Participants Per Event
USAFRICOM	2,080,000	105	19,810	2530	24	822	635	3276	537	5
USCENTCOM	1,757,000	65	27,031	780	12	2,253	372	4723	251	4
USEUCOM	2,669,000	175	15,251	3094	18	863	1009	2645	1775	10
USNORTHCOM	86,000	10	8,600	108	11	796	52	1654	108	11
USPACOM	1,404,000	71	19,775	1895	27	741	413	3400	297	4
USSOUTHCOM	2,315,000	191	12,120	2143	11	1,080	954	2427	862	5
TOTAL	10,311,000	617	16,712	10550	17	977	3435	3002	3830	6

Figure 6.   SPP Activities Conducted in FY 2014

Source: Author created with data from Department of Defense, *State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2014: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 25, 2015).

FY 2015										
GCC	Total DoD Cost ($)	Total # of SPP Engagements	Avg Cost Per Engagement ($)	Total # Foreign Participants	Avg # Foreign Participants Per Event	Avg Cost Per Participant ($)	Total # Activity Days	Avg Cost Per Day ($)	Total # NG Participants	Avg # NG Participants Per Event
USAFRICOM	2,079,663	107	19,436	2042	19	1,018	687	3027	565	5
USCENTCOM	1,278,123	62	20,615	657	11	1,945	330	3873	342	6
USEUCOM	4,572,423	308	14,846	2299	7	1,989	1553	2944	1432	5
USNORTHCOM	88,078	8	11,010	73	9	1,207	25	3523	182	23
USPACOM	1,717,601	68	25,259	2264	33	759	480	3578	643	9
USSOUTHCOM	2,662,281	226	11,780	3049	13	873	637	4179	1873	8
TOTAL	12,398,169	779	15,915	10384	13	1,194	3712	3340	5037	6

Figure 7.   SPP Activities Conducted in FY 2015

Source: Author created with data from Department of Defense, *State Partnership Program FY 2015: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 14, 2016).

USAFRICOM's TCP is based on a 1-5 year outlook and is comprised of LOEs that aim to achieve sustainable security in Africa (Rodriguez 2016, 14). The objective of the current TCP is to establish effective and enduring civilian and military institutions guided by the rule of law and a merit-based promotion system (Rodriguez 2016, 14). Accomplishing this will enable USAFRICOM to achieve its theater strategic end state: "a

strategic environment in which African nations are willing and capable of addressing security threats, not solely from a military perspective, but from the foundations of governance, security, and development" (Rodriguez 2016, 13).

The review of literature established the SPP's LOEs and main objectives, and qualitatively described USAFRICOM's TCP objective and strategic end state. To aid in answering the secondary, and ultimately the primary research question, the remaining components of the operational approach will be developed through further review of the data contained in the FY 2014 and FY 2015 SPP annual reports to Congress. Amalgamating these data sets with the data obtained from the FFP 2016 FSI report will enable quantitative analysis during the application of the evaluation criteria.

The FFP 2016 FSI report contains a ranking of 178 nations based on their levels of stability and the pressures impacting these nations (Messner et al. 2016, 3). The fragile states framework is instrumental in understanding and defining the current conditions in West Africa. According to Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-07, *Stability*, "a fragile state is a country that suffers from institutional weaknesses serious enough to threaten the stability of the central government. These weaknesses arise from several root causes, including ineffective governance, criminalization of the state, economic failure, external aggression, and internal strife due to disenfranchisement of large sections of the population" (DA 2012, 1-11).

A process that the Army uses to understand, predict, and therefore create plans to address a fragile state is the analysis of the operational environment. To describe the operational environment of a given problem set, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 5-0, *The Operations Process*, prescribes analysis through the lens of eight interrelated

variables: political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical

environment, and time (PMESII-PT) (DA 2012, 1-7). Similarly, the FFP organization's

2016 FSI utilizes a proprietary analytical platform known as the Conflict Assessment

System Tool (CAST) that aggregates data from over a hundred sub-indicators to assign

values to the 12 categories that comprise the overarching indicators: political and

military, social, and economic (Messner et al. 2016, 12-13). The qualitative data

associated with the 12 categories are aggregated based on FFP's comprehensive

methodologies to produce the overall rankings of the 178 nations based on a scale of 0.0

to 120.0. The lower the numerical assessment, the greater the stability; conversely, the

higher the numerical assessment, the greater the risks of a nation being pushed to the

brink of failure. Through a review of the FSI assessments, the researcher deduced the

corresponding numerical ranges and categories depicted in table 2.

Table 2. FSI Ranges and Categories	
Range	Category
110.0 – 120.0	Very High Alert
100.0 – 109.9	High Alert
90.0 – 99.9	Alert
80.0 – 89.9	High Warning
70.0 – 79.9	Elevated Warning
60.0 – 69.9	Warning
50.0 – 59.9	Stable
40.0 – 49.9	More Stable
30.0 – 39.9	Very Stable
20.0 – 29.9	Sustainable
< 20.0	Very Sustainable

Source: Author created with data from J. J. Messner et al., *Fragile States Index 2016* (Washington, DC: The Fund For Peace, 2016), 6-7.

In his posture statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Rodriguez places the current conditions in Africa into context by highlighting the increasing stress on public services, security, and infrastructure and the vulnerability of the ungoverned or under-governed areas to criminal and terrorist exploitation (Rodriguez 2016, 3). Rodriguez's statement suggests that the higher a nation ranks on the FSI index (i.e., the higher the numerical value assigned to a nation), the more vulnerable it is to terrorist and criminal activities, as indicated in his remarks. Linking the fear and distrust of government and security forces with the limited access to the fundamental opportunities for employment and democratic participation, Rodriguez describes the strategic environment in Africa as "ripe for the expansion of violent extremism" (Rodriguez 2016, 3). To bolster this qualitative assessment with quantitative data, the

researcher combined DoD and FFP 2016 FSI data in figure 8. By taking the sum of the

FSI index data for West Africa and computing the average, the result is a West African

regional FSI index score of 90.2, and a corresponding "alert" status assessment.

WEST AFRICA AOR	SPP PARTNER STATE (Year Established)	FSI INDEX (2016)	FFP ASSESSMENT	DECADE TRENDS (2007-2016)
Republic of Guinea		103.8	High Alert	Some Worsening: +2.5
Federal Republic of Nigeria	California (2006)	103.5	High Alert	Worsening: +7.9
Republic of Guinea-Bissau		99.8	Alert	Significant Worsening: +11.0
Republic of Niger	Indiana (2017)	98.4	Alert	Worsening: +7.2
Republic of Cote d'Ivoire		97.9	Alert	Strong Improvement: -9.4
Republic of Liberia	Michigan (2009)	95.5	Alert	Some Worsening: +2.6
Republic of Mali		95.2	Alert	Critical Worsening: +19.7
Republic of Sierra Leone		91.0	Alert	Some Improvement: -2.4
Burkina Faso		89.4	High Warning	Insignificant Change: -0.3
Islamic Republic of The Gambia		86.8	High Warning	Significant Worsening: +10.8
Togolese Republic	North Dakota (2014)	85.8	High Warning	Marginal Improvement: -0.8
Republic of Senegal	Vermont (2008)	83.6	High Warning	Critical Worsening: +16.7
Republic of Benin	North Dakota (2014)	78.9	Elevated Warning	Worsening: +6.9
Republic of Cabo Verde		71.5	Elevated Warning	Strong Improvement: -9.6
Republic of Ghana	North Dakota (2004)	71.2	Elevated Warning	Worsening: +9.3

Figure 8.   Current SPP Partnerships in West Africa and Corresponding FFP Assessments
and Trends

Source: Author created with data from J. J. Messner et al., *Fragile States Index 2016.*
(Washington, DC: The Fund For Peace, 2016); National Guard Bureau "State Partnership
Program," accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/
31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/
SPP%20Partnership%20Map.pdf.

The data in figure 8 suggests that the SPP is capable of maintaining partnerships

with nations experiencing varying degrees of fragility. In January 2017, USAFRICOM

announced the formation of a new partnership between Indiana and the Republic of

Niger, a nation assessed as having an "alert" status on the FSI fragility scale. North

Dakota has been a partner with the Republic of Ghana since 2004, and the nation was

assessed in 2016 as having an "elevated warning" status. In contrast, California has been

a partner with the Federal Republic of Nigeria since 2006, and the nation was assessed as having a "high alert" status on the FSI fragility scale. Further analysis reveals that with the exception of one SPP experiencing "marginal improvement" (the North Dakota and Togolese Republic partnership), all of the current SPP partnered nations have experienced varying degrees of degradation between 2007 and 2016.

Paramount to this cursory analysis is that the FSI assessments of West Africa do not result from the efforts of the SPP alone, nor from solely USAFRICOM's efforts. There are a host of international organizations that provide aid and assistance in this region; notably, U.S.-allied countries such as France and the United Kingdom have contributed deeply to defense institution building efforts in Africa (McNerney, et al. 2016a, 119). However, the CCMD's TSCP is the primary LOE for increasing stability across the African AOR, as it is described as "the cornerstone of [USAFRICOM's] sustained security engagement with African partners" (USAFRICOM 2017c). SC efforts to increase stability in West African nations achieves USAFRICOM's objectives to assure access and maintain enduring relations with partnered militaries, and remains a strategic requirement in order to protect U.S. national interests.

Further literature review indicates that SC at USAFRICOM is a multi-pronged effort involving interagency coordination to leverage and synchronize a host of civilian and military organizations. USAFRICOM's website mentions 12 SC LOEs. These include the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, led and funded by the DoS; the Africa Deployment Assistance Partnership Team; the Africa Partnership Station program, a U.S. Naval Forces Africa maritime program aimed at building maritime safety and security capabilities; the Africa Maritime Law Enforcement

Partnership; Foreign Military Sales; International Military and Education Training; the

Medical Civil Action Program; the Pandemic Response Program, which partners with the

U.S. Agency for International Development; Partner Military HIV/AIDS Program, a DoD

HIV/AIDS Prevention Program effort in foreign militaries; Partnership for Integrated

Logistics Operations and Tactics; and the Veterinary Civil Action Program

(USAFRICOM 2017c).

To understand the extent of the SPP's support of USAFRICOM's TSCP, the data

in figures 6 and 7 was referenced along with data obtained through further review of the

literature. For FY 2015, USAFRICOM reported the conduct of 400 SC activities, an

increase from the 363 activities conducted the year prior (Rodriguez 2016, 4). Based on

these numbers, SPP activities accounted for 29 percent of all SC activities conducted in

FY 2014, and 27 percent of all SC activities conducted in FY 2015. This analysis

suggests that the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's SC LOE, is contributing to a

higher extent than its 11 USAFRICOM SC cohorts. However, each SC LOE and their

respective activities play a unique and vital role in enabling USAFRICOM to achieve its

strategic end state. The data contained in the FY 2015 SPP's report to Congress contained

country-specific data that enabled analysis of the SPP's efforts in West Africa

specifically. Figure 9 depicts the 12 partnerships and associated expenditures. The non-

West African nations were subdued for contrast. The data suggests that USAFRICOM,

the embassies in Africa, and the SPP focused funding and resources on West Africa

during FY 2015. This is a potential indicator of the strategic significance of this region.

Combatant Command	Total # SPP Activities Conducted	Total DoD Cost ($)	% of Total Expenditure
USAFRICOM	**FY15**		
Benin	4	$53,980	3%
Botswana	18	$207,725	
Djibouti	3	$61,569	
Ghana	14	$147,883	7%
Kenya	1	$40,259	
Liberia	7	$360,316	17%
Morocco	18	$487,804	
Nigeria	4	$26,990	1%
Senegal	17	$462,207	22%
South Africa	5	$59,000	
Togo	4	$113,813	5%
Tunisia	12	$97,976	
TOTAL		**$2,119,522**	**55%** of total USAFRICOM NG SPP expenditure supported activities in West Africa

Figure 9.   SPP USAFRICOM Expenditure by Country in FY 2015

Source: Author created with data from Department of Defense, *State Partnership Program FY 2015: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 14, 2016); National Guard Bureau "State Partnership Program," accessed February 19, 2017, http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20Partnership%20Map.pdf.

The desired future conditions in the West African region dovetails with the overarching conditions required for USAFRICOM's strategic end state: the establishment of "a strategic environment in which African nations are willing and capable of addressing security threats, not solely from a military perspective, but from the foundations of governance, security, and development" (Rodriguez 2016, 13). USAFRICOM's command approach indicates that the current theater strategy has a 5-20

year outlook (Rodriguez 2016, 13). Through a quantitative lens, the desired future conditions within the next decade in West Africa would be a less elevated regional FSI assessment than the current "alert" status to a status of "elevated warning." A lower risk of failure than "elevated warning" on the FSI assessment scale would be ideal, but not realistic within a ten-year timeframe.

The expanded review of literature, bolstered by data sets provided by the FFP 2016 FSI report, provided the information required to develop the operational approach and answer the secondary research questions, "What are the current SPP activities in West Africa?" and "What should the conditions in West Africa be in the next 10 years?" The next step, Step Two, will be to assemble the components that resulted: step one established the current conditions in West Africa, the SPP LOEs and main objectives, USAFRICOM's TCP objective and strategic end state, and the associated time horizons.

Step Two: Develop the Operational Approach

The second step is to develop an operational approach. This model will serve to frame the context for the meta-analysis of the data and the overall assessment resulting from the criteria evaluations, and ultimately aid in answering the primary research question. The information and qualitative data from the literature review created the components for the completed SPP operational approach for West Africa. These components were then assembled to complete the operational approach depicted in figure 10.
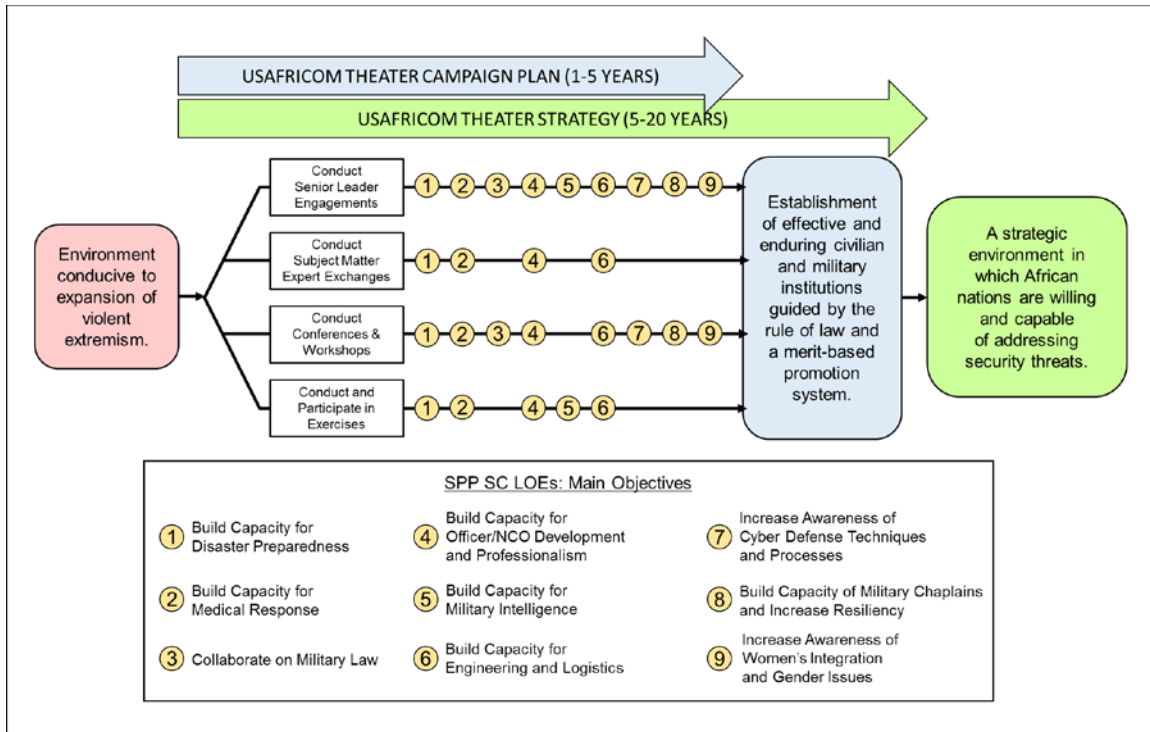
Figure 10. SPP Operational Approach for USAFRICOM

Sources: Author created with data from *Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, USA, Commander, United States Africa Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, United States Africa Command 2016 Posture Statement, March 8, 2016; and Department of Defense, *State Partnership Program FY 2015: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 14, 2016).

The operational approach in figure 10 illustrates the current conditions framed as a problem set. The LOEs and the main SPP objectives are templated to depict the logic of purpose, framing the ways to address the problem (with the SPP being the means). The USAFRICOM TCP objective and theater strategy are framed as the ends. This ends-ways-means construct is an expression of operational art, and confirms that the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP, offers a valid solution set. The next step, Step Three, is to apply the evaluation criteria and assessment rubrics to determine the viability of the SPP's support of USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs.

Step Three: Application of Evaluation Criteria

To determine the viability, or potential for success of the SPP's expansion in West Africa, three evaluation criteria will be applied: the aspects of cost-benefit, effectiveness, and perseverance were selected to evaluate the SPP's current performance within the USAFRICOM AOR. This step answers the secondary research question, "Is the SPP a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOE?" and will aid in answering the remaining secondary research question, "Should the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP, expand in West Africa?"

The first evaluation criteria is cost-benefit. To be sustainable, SC activities must be efficient and conducted to established standards to build interoperability and cohesion. The benchmark for this criteria is the costs associated with the conduct of SC activities at the other five GCCs for the respective FY. The deviation from the average costs associated with conducting SC events, the deviation from the average costs associated with each foreign participant, and the deviation from the average number of foreign participants in the activities conducted during the FY will determine the assessments of good, better, or best for each aspect. The average cost per event was determined by taking the total DoD cost for the FY and dividing by the total number of SPP engagements conducted program-wide. The average cost for each participant was calculated by dividing the total DoD cost for the FY and dividing by the total number of foreign participants for the year. The mean total participants was determined by dividing the total number of foreign participants for all SPP engagements during the FY and dividing by the total number of GCCs. The detailed rubric for this criteria is depicted in figure 11.

Evaluation Criteria
- Cost-Benefit -

The costs associated with conducting SPP activities in USAFRICOM should produce similar or better results when compared with the other CCMDs. Effective SC leverages low-cost opportunities to conduct training to the standards required for interoperability. The evaluation of cost-benefit for SPP activities conducted at USAFRICOM will consider the average cost per event, the average cost per foreign participant, and the number of participants trained per year, relative to the SPP activities conducted at the other CCMDs.

- Cost per event exceeds $5K from average.
- Cost per foreign participant exceeds $1K per event.
- Number of foreign participants is equal to or below the average per year.
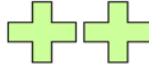
- Cost per event exceeds $1K but less than $5K from average.
- Cost per foreign participant exceeds $500 but less than $1K average per event.
- Number of foreign participants is equal to, or greater than the average by up to 100 participants.

- Cost per event is $1K or less from average.
- Cost per foreign participant is less than $500 per event from average.
- Number of foreign participants exceeds the average by greater than 100 participants.

Figure 11. Evaluation Criteria for Cost-Benefit

Source: Created by author. Design adapted from Jack D. Kem, *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts and Tools* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, August 2012), 276.

Application of the cost-benefit rubric to the FY 2014 and FY 2015 data sets depicted in figures 6 and 7 yielded identical results across all three aspects of this criteria. The average costs per event exceeded the program-wide average by $3,098 and $3,521 respectively. The cost per foreign participant were below average by $155 in FY 2014, and $176 in FY 2015. Across all GCCs, the average total number of foreign participants were 1758 and 1731 in FYs 2014 and 2015 respectively, and USAFRICOM total foreign participants exceeded both: 772 participates greater than the average in FY 2014, and 311 greater in FY 2015. The results of the applied rubric is depicted in figure 12. The average

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score of 2.67 across all three aspects of this criteria was rounded up to 3.00 (best) to
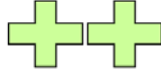
determine the overall assessment.

Cost-Benefit	Evaluation
Cost per event relative to average	+ +
Cost per participant relative to average	+ + +
Number of participants per event relative to average	+ + +
Overall Assessment	+ + + (2.67)

Figure 12. Results of the Applied Evaluation Criteria for Cost-Benefit

Source: Created by author.

The second evaluation criteria is effectiveness. SPP partnerships are most

effective when the program develops enduring relationships over time while building

partner capacity with foreign nations. To accomplish this, SPP activities must support the

GCC's priorities, and balance requirements and requests from partnered nations made

through the respective country teams. In addition to conducting SPP engagements that

align with USAFRICOM's priorities, the frequency and duration of these engagements

serve as an additional measure of effectiveness. The assessment rubric for the

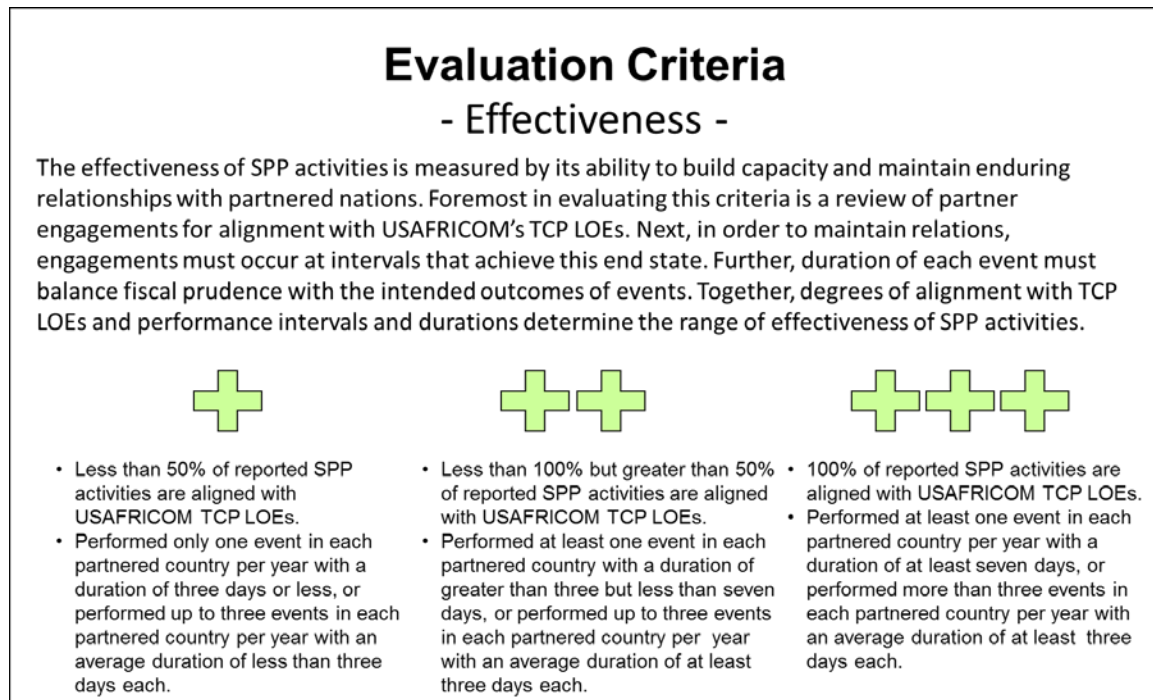effectiveness criteria is depicted in figure 13.

Evaluation Criteria
- Effectiveness -

The effectiveness of SPP activities is measured by its ability to build capacity and maintain enduring relationships with partnered nations. Foremost in evaluating this criteria is a review of partner engagements for alignment with USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs. Next, in order to maintain relations, engagements must occur at intervals that achieve this end state. Further, duration of each event must balance fiscal prudence with the intended outcomes of events. Together, degrees of alignment with TCP LOEs and performance intervals and durations determine the range of effectiveness of SPP activities.

- Less than 50% of reported SPP activities are aligned with USAFRICOM TCP LOEs.
- Performed only one event in each partnered country per year with a duration of three days or less, or performed up to three events in each partnered country per year with an average duration of less than three days each.

- Less than 100% but greater than 50% of reported SPP activities are aligned with USAFRICOM TCP LOEs.
- Performed at least one event in each partnered country with a duration of greater than three but less than seven days, or performed up to three events in each partnered country per year with an average duration of at least three days each.

- 100% of reported SPP activities are aligned with USAFRICOM TCP LOEs.
- Performed at least one event in each partnered country per year with a duration of at least seven days, or performed more than three events in each partnered country per year with an average duration of at least three days each.

Figure 13. Evaluation Criteria for Effectiveness

Source: Created by author. Design adapted from Jack D. Kem, *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts and Tools* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, August 2012), 276.

The review of literature provided the data required for the first aspect of this

criteria. During FY 15, all SPP engagements were linked to a USAFRICOM Intermediate

Military Objective or LOE and documented in G-TSCMIS per the SPP program

guidance. The information provided in figure 9 and additional review of the report that

provided the data for this chart confirms that more than three events were conducted with

each partnered nation in West Africa, each with a duration of three days or more (DoD

2016, 13-21). An overall assessment of 3.00 (best) was determined, and the results of the applied rubrics for this criteria are depicted in figure 14.

Figure 14. Results of the Applied Evaluation Criteria for Effectiveness
Source: Created by author.

The third evaluation criteria is perseverance. To be viable, SC programs must demonstrate the capacity and resolve to support the accomplishment of the GCC's TCPs and long-range strategic end state. To evaluate this criteria at USAFRICOM, two rubrics are applied. First, a determination of the longevity of existing SPP partnerships in West Africa will be made. Since USAFRICOM's TCP has a planning horizon of one to five years, the assessment for this aspect considers whether partnerships have endured for less than five years, at least five years, and greater than five years. Since longevity alone is not a fair, nor effective indicator of perseverance, this aspect was combined with varying

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degrees of demonstrated planning efforts made toward future SPP engagements. On the

lower end of the scale is no evidence of long-range planning for partnerships that have

endured for greater than five years or evidence of long-range planning combined with

partnerships that have endured for less than five years. On the upper end of the scale, the

qualifier, "continuous" was added to the evidence of long-range planning horizons to

differentiate between assessments of "better" and "best." The complete assessment rubric

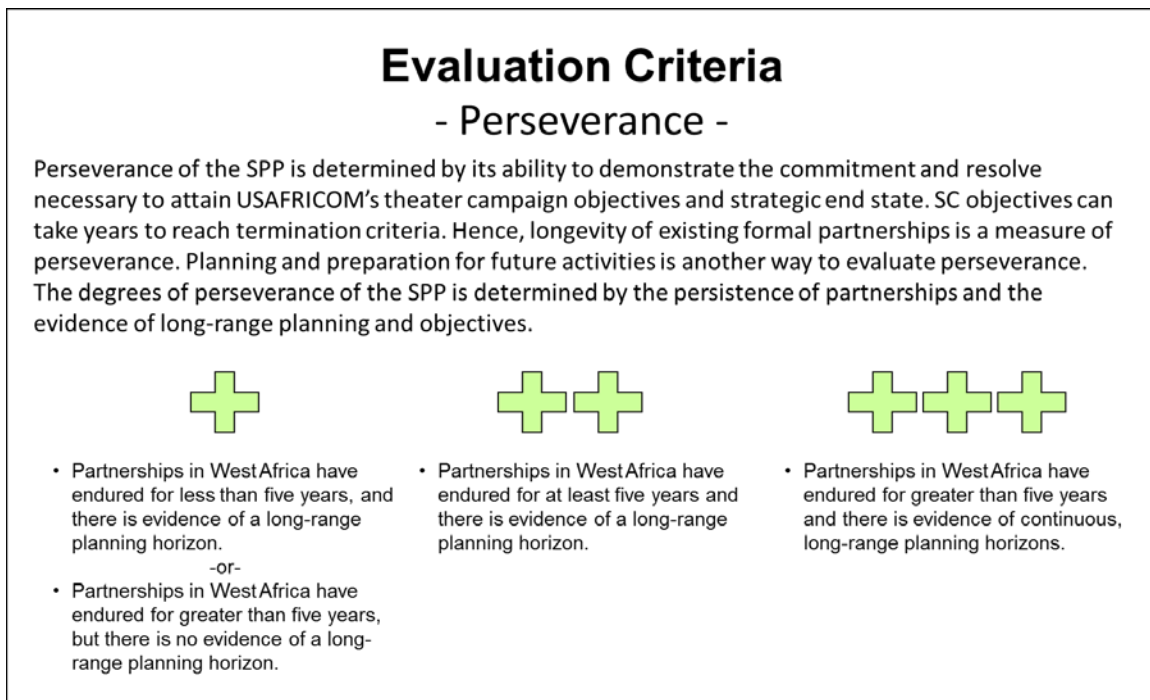for the perseverance evaluation criteria is depicted in figure 15.

Figure 15. Evaluation Criteria for Perseverance

Source: Created by author. Design adapted from Jack D. Kem, *Planning for Action: Campaign Concepts and Tools* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, August 2012), 276.

To assess the first part of this criteria, a review of the literature and figure 4 was required. The data indicates that there are currently seven partnerships established in West Africa. The newest partnership was formed in January 2017, and the most enduring partnership was formed 13 years ago in 2004, between North Dakota and the Republic of Ghana. The average age of all seven partnerships in this region is approximately 6.7 years. The second part of this criteria was assessed by reviewing figure 5. This diagram indicates a continuous planning cycle centered on strategic priorities, and involves participation by high-level U.S. government agency leaders to determine requirements, funding authorities, capabilities, and resources. The combination of both parts of this evaluation criteria is depicted in figure 16. The overall assessment for the perseverance of the SPP is 3.00 (best).

Perseverance	Evaluation
Longevity of SPP partnerships in West Africa	➕➕➕
Evidence of long-term planning horizon at USAFRICOM	➕➕➕
Overall Assessment	➕➕➕ (3.00)

Figure 16. Results of the Applied Evaluation Criteria for Perseverance

Source: Created by author.

The completed assessments for the three evaluation criteria in this section yielded the data required to determine the viability of expanding the SPP in West Africa to support USAFRICOM'S TCP LOEs. The next step, Step Four, will aggregate this data and answer the secondary research questions.

Step Four: Aggregation of Data

The fourth step in the research design is to aggregate and present the findings. The research suggests that USAFRICOM's SPP engagements, vis-à-vis the remaining five GCCs, has a high cost-benefit rating. Further, there are strong indications of effectiveness based on alignment with the CCMD's TCP objectives and theater strategic end state, and the frequency and duration of partner engagements. Finally, the SPP in West Africa demonstrates a high level of perseverance based on its enduring partnerships with the nations in the region, and the utilization of a continuous strategic planning cycle.

Table 3. Assessment of Viability of SPP Expansion in West Africa			
Evaluation Criteria	+ Good (1 point)	++ Better (2 points)	+++ Best (3 points)
Cost-Benefit 1) Are the funding and resources applied to SPP activities in USAFRICOM producing results at or above the performance rates of SPP activities at other CCMDs?			**X**
Effectiveness 2) Has the SPP been effective in supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs?			**X**
Perseverance 3) Has the SPP demonstrated the necessary commitment to attain USAFRICOM's strategic end state?			**X**

Source: Created by author.

The overall assessments for each of the three evaluation criteria was used to populate the chart contained in table 1, and is depicted in table 3. The total score for all three criteria was 8.67, out of a total of 9.00. The data informs an overall assessment of the SPP's viability for expansion in West Africa in support of USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs as "best." This information establishes that the expansion of the SPP in West Africa is a viable option for supporting USAFRICOM's TCP LOEs.

Referring back to the operational approach in figure 10 and applying the results of the evaluation criteria establishes that the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's TSCP, should expand in West Africa. Further, Given USAFRICOM's five-year horizon for its TCP and 20-year horizon for its strategic end state, the next ten years presents an opportunity for the SPP to propagate its SC efforts to enable willing and able partner militaries to provide for sustainable internal security against external threats, and to support the framework for good governance in the region. The next step, Step Five, will present the conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis conducted in the previous steps.

Step Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand its efforts in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region? Given the current era of fiscal constraint, the U.S. national interests in Africa and the increasing strategic significance of the West African region, the answer to the primary research question is, yes. Based on the literature review, applied evaluation criteria, and context of the operational approach, the SPP offers an optimal solution for shaping conditions that contribute to improving the relationships with, and capacities of partnered nations over time through both its military engagements and its ability to leverage a whole of government approach to defense institution building. General conclusions and recommendations stemming from this research are found in the next chapter, chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Introduction

If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.
— African Proverb

The purpose of this paper was to answer the question, "Should the National Guard's State Partnership Program expand in West Africa within the next decade to combat the influence of terrorist and criminal organizations in the region?" To reach a conclusion, four fundamental secondary research questions were answered. These secondary questions provided insight into the opportunities and challenges for the SPP, as well as potential recommendations for the learning demands of the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3, *Shape the Security Environment*. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from this research will enhance future discussions on the way ahead for security cooperation efforts in the West Africa region.

Conclusions

This study determined that based on the strategic importance of Africa, and the growing threat to U.S. national interests by violent extremist organizations and transnational criminal activity in the West African region, the SPP, as a component of USAFRICOM's TCP SC LOE, should expand its efforts within the next decade to support the theater strategic end state for this AOR. The SPP at large is a proven model of success for efficiently building and maintaining enduring relationships around the globe. In West Africa specifically, the research provided further evidence of this in the key areas

of cost-benefit, effectiveness, and perseverance. The following three conclusions that support the expansion of SPP efforts in this region were reached.

First, that in FYs 2014 and 2015, SPP engagements in USAFRICOM ranked third highest in total DoD SPP spending, behind USEUCOM and USSOUTHCOM. Yet, the ratio of participation by the representative partnered nations were higher in USAFRICOM than in USEUCOM and USSOUTHCOM in FY 2014, and higher than in USEUCOM in FY2015 as indicated by the cost per participant for each CCMD. Engagements at USAFRICOM yielded considerable cost-benefit, and the high participation rates could indicate willingness and potentially the strength of the relationships established between the partnered states and the respective West African nation's militaries. This kind of support could yield even higher returns within the framework of a regional coalition such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Second, SPP engagements in West Africa are aligned with USAFRICOM's intermediate military objectives and security cooperation LOEs. Based solely on this facet, the program is shown to be effective at achieving the command's TCP objectives over the next decade. With the launch of the G-TSCMIS database in 2014, the SPP's reports to Congress provided quantifiable data with regards to performance and spending. However, the direct link between aligned efforts and the intended increases to the partnered nation's military capacity continues to be illusive across the gamut of DoD's SC options.

Third, that the SPP is a sustainable program in West Africa, based on its demonstrated relative perseverance in the region specifically. The program at large has evolved and gained heightened support and resources since the end of the Cold War.

Given the time horizons for theater campaign plans and theater strategies, the SPP's capacity to maintain enduring and meaningful relationships with partnered nation militaries provides CCDRs around the globe with shaping options that are at once flexible and invaluable.

This study's methodology employed an operational approach that utilized evaluation criteria for the meta-analysis of the research data. The results of the evaluation criteria helped to form the additional conclusions relative to, and in support of the answer to the primary research question. However, in reviewing the operational approach and retrospectively, the evaluation criteria for effectiveness, opportunities for further development of the SPP and its SC efforts in West Africa were unveiled.

<u>Recommendations for Decision Makers</u>

Based on the findings and conclusions listed previously, these are the recommendations for the way ahead for the expansion of the SPP in the West Africa region, and for the learning demands associated with the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3: *Shape the Security Environment*. The following four recommendations are provided.

First, in harmony with the Rand study on "SMART" security cooperation objectives, planners should utilize a form of design methodology to determine the problem sets framed by the GCC's theater objectives. While military-military engagements continue to be the main effort during building partner capacity activities, in West Africa, vital supporting efforts or even the solution itself may be in the form of military-to-civilian or even civilian-to-civilian engagements, the bailiwick of the SPP. The application of this unique capability should be followed up with periodic assessments

to determine the effectiveness of the SPP efforts in achieving the CCMD's theater objectives. This recommendation is linked to the fifth learning demand of the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3, *Shape the Security Environment*: How can the Army better enable Army Service Component Commands to identify supporting objectives, identify requirements, set priorities for countries and resources, and assess the activity and its impact on the theater security objective? (DA 2017). These assessments, along with the details of the SC engagements conducted by the SPP should be reflected in G-TSCMIS. The updates to this database should be comprehensive, timely, and continuous.

As implied by its full name, the G-TSCMIS was designed to be the DoD's worldwide security cooperation repository. The benefits and potential of this system is evident in the improved reporting of the SPP activities conducted in FY 2015, compared with the report presented to Congress for FY 2014. The former provides greater fidelity on the types of engagements conducted, and qualitatively depicted alignment with the CCMD's theater objectives. Given USAFRICOM's LOEs and priorities for SC engagements, G-TSCMIS should be configured to enable categorical visualization of these by region and by country. This visualization should enable planners to more readily determine the appropriate type, content, and duration of engagements to conduct to meet the CCDR's intent. This recommendation is linked to the first learning demand of the Army Warfighting Challenge #2/3, *Shape the Security Environment*: How can the Army develop a common operating picture of security cooperation activities among the components, including special operations forces and unified action partners, to ensure unity of effort for activities that mutually support the Integrated Country Strategy and GCC goals (DA 2017)? This will benefit not only the USAFRICOM staff and West

Africa's country teams, but enable RAF and SPP planners to better anticipate requirements as well. Again, to be effective, G-TSCMIS should be updated with templated and completed events as close to real-time as possible in order to maintain a global common operating picture.

Third, since this study determined that the SPP is a viable option for meeting the USAFRICOM's TCP objectives, DoD funding for the program at this CCMD should be maintained or increased commensurate with the breadth of expansion and tempo of the efforts required based on strategic guidance and theater priorities. Given the current fiscally constrained environment, strategic priorities must be considered foremost, and the option to cross-level allocated funding from other GCCs should be the last resort, should additionally funding not be available to further expansion efforts in West Africa.

Fourth, GCCs should synchronize the efforts of the SPP and future RAF efforts through continued collaboration and coordination. This is key to efficient and effective SC planning, as both parties can benefit from sharing, updating, and validating the security cooperation assessments at USAFRICOM. Further, the RAF can leverage the continuity established by the SPP, whose teams remain relatively constant over time, vis-à-vis the current RAF model whose key personnel may relocate to other theaters based on assignment or advancement requirements. Both efforts complement each other.

These recommendations support the conclusion of the primary research question answered by this study. Indeed, should the right opportunities present themselves and the assumptions hold true, the SPP should expand its efforts across the remaining eight nations in the West Africa region. However, further research is required in order to determine the best way forward.

Recommendations for Future Research

A myriad of considerations impact the prospect of expanding SPP efforts in West Africa. Chief among these is the prioritization for expansion. This determination involves discussions among key decision makers, and is necessarily informed by detailed analysis by SMEs in the pertinent fields. The resultant multidisciplinary analysis needs to be factored in to the calculus that underpins this endeavor. Hence, further research into the geopolitical climate, military capabilities (including sustainability of equipment, personnel, and training programs), and other elements of the operational environment is required. This research will aid in further studies required to determine effectiveness of SC engagements with greater quantitative detail.

Periodic assessments of a partnered nation's military is only one part of the equation in determining the effectiveness of SC engagements. This approach is likely the most pragmatic and cost-effective option for doing so. Further research into the key indicators of progress or decline, as well as factors impacting (whether supportive or detrimental) the outcomes of SC activities should be furthered in order to account for variations in outcomes and effectiveness of these efforts. Security cooperation is not conducted in isolation, and because it is an interagency effort, further research should consider how best to unify and account for the contributions of the various organizations. To address the issue of countering the influences of transregional terrorist and transnational criminal activities, focused research on the specific kinds of SC engagements will benefit from interagency collaboration as well.

Lastly, a collaborative approach to West Africa by a regional application of the SPP should also be studied in order to determine if cost-benefit, effectiveness, and

perseverance can be leveraged. Future research into the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability of establishing a Regional Security System for the West Africa region should be conducted. This study should include participation by representatives of the U.S. DoD and DoS, as well as members of organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West Africa States so that if deemed a worthwhile enterprise, the coalition building can begin from the propagation of ideas by, with, and through prospective partners.

Parting Thoughts

In the foreseeable future, the U.S. will remain the preeminent leader of global democracy. It achieved this status by carefully navigating the turbulent tides of risk and reward around the world for several generations. Today, the waves of opportunity fall unpredictably upon the shores of West Africa. There is much work ahead for the African people, who are at once the solution to their own prosperity and a key partner in ensuring the security of U.S. national interests in the region. The National Guard's State Partnership Program emerged from a region of fragile democracies where the idea of partnering to model democratic values abroad took root on fertile grounds. Similar conditions exist today in West Africa. The SPP offers the U.S. a low-risk, high-reward approach that yields dividends over time. Shaping the security environment, like tending crops, requires careful study, hard work, and a lot of patience. Starting today is always a better option than waiting until tomorrow.

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